THE DECORATIVE ART · OF JAPAN

F. T. PIGGOTT

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I owe my readers an apology for a serious mistake which I have made in the first sentence. Like many others I misread the telegrams announcing the fire which took place some time ago at Shiba, taking it to indicate that the Temples of the Shoguns had been destroyed, and I have remained in that belief ever since. Immediately after publication I have been informed of my error, and hasten to rectify it, and to apologise for not having verified my references. It is gratifying to know that however much twenty years may have increased Time's wastage of their beauties, the Temples have been spared destruction.

F. T. P.

STUDIES IN THE DECORATIVE ART OF JAPAN

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YOKOHAMA: KELLY & WALSH, LIMITED

SHANGHAI—HONGKONG—SINGAPORE

1910

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The three fragments of brocade, which serve as a triple frontis-piece, are given as typical examples of the art of design in its most elaborate expression, when colour and the sheen of silk lend their aid to highten the effect. They illustrate also the great dexterity of draughtsmanship to which Japanese artists, sometimes very humble ones, often attain.

BROCADE

Plate 1.
Frontispiece -A.

BROCADE WITH EMBROIDERY

Plate 2.
Frontispiece—B.

BROCADE

Plate 3.
Frontispiece—C.

I have not attempted in these pages anything approaching an exhaustive examination of the decorative art of Japan. The area it covers is so extensive that I doubt if it is possible to do more than touch lightly upon its manifold phases; for even the most diligent student there always come surprises, and the end of his labours ever recedes into the distance. The art knows no limitations, and a hundred books would not be sufficient to set it forth in all its infinite variety. Studies, somewhat intermittent I fear, seem to me to be all that is possible.

The decoration of the temples has been treated as a distinct subject; for although it touches the art of the people at many points, and on one side of it reveals the historic influence of the Buddhist religion as it came to Japan through China from India, yet stands apart as an art specially Japanese, inspired by the national purposes to which it was put.

I am conscious that the method I have adopted for reproducing the designs is open to much criticism, for it is limited only to their general effect—very imperfect sketches of light and shade, leaving the student or the architect to work out the ground-plan, or scheme of construction, for himself.

The examples of the more popular and better-known side of the art are for the most part tracings from lacquer boxes. It is here that the impossibility of touching more than the fringe of the subject makes itself greatly felt; and I have been compelled to limit myself to an endeavour to illustrate the broad principles on which the Japanese designers work.

A special chapter is devoted to the evolution of the "key"-border in the East. The conclusions arrived at in it are not at all in accordance with the tradition which assigns its origin to Greece.

In 1892, I gave a lecture at the Royal Institution on that bastard decoration, then so prevalent in England, for which "Japanesque" seemed the most appropriate name; and in the following year some of the designs figured in this book formed the subject of a series of articles in the "Builder." I trust that the idea of preserving in more permanent form the designs, as well as some of the opinions expressed on those two occasions, will not be thought presumptuous.

F. T. P.

Hongkong,

March, 1910.

STUDIES

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THE ART OF THE TEMPLES

The Nikko and the Shiba Temples as I knew them twenty years ago have passed away; Nikko the beautiful has decked herself anew, Shiba has been destroyed by fire. These temples were the home of one branch of the art of Japan, studied in the days gone by, of which I have attempted to reproduce an echo.

I must introduce those of my readers who are unfamiliar with them to these splendid shrines, and to the genius which pervades them, inspiring this art, which for pure decoration stands unrivalled.

The famous avenue of cryptomerias, winding like a lazy dragon across the plain from Utsonomiya, ends at the entrance to the long village street of Nikko: the Daiya-gawa bustling along through the rocks and boulders which are its bed, in autumn a mountain torrent tumbling in the new channels made last winter, recklessly cleaving new ones for the floods to come: from the bridge one of those landscape pictures which make the beauty of Japan, the mountains of Chiuzenji in the distance, and the red lacquer bridge for foreground: paths winding up the hillside in the shade of the giant trees, past priests' houses, past the Mangwanji with its sweeping roof, and its garden whence comes the mellow boom of the great bell telling the passing hour: a broad roadway in the sunshine leading to the massive stone torii: a flight of steps, a gorgeous portico, and then a glitter of gold and colour, shrines, cryptomerias, here dark groves of gloom, there the glinting rays of the sun: groups of soberly-clad peasants reverently curious: paths leading upwards through the mighty trees to the unseen hills, a world of its own, dwelt in by the priests and the spirits of the dead Shoguns: unique, which leaves the mind dazed, the eyes dazzled, with so little definite impression on either that the hotel verandah comes almost as a welcome relief.

But the temples lure you back, and back again, until definite impressions begin to formulate in the brain, and the eye finds signs by which to know where pathways lead, to recognise one shrine from another, and tokens which as the days go by become familiar, and in the after-years translate themselves into imperishable memories of greatest beauty.

The great white gate with its storied roof and heavily-carved columns holds you first, and compels men of all creeds and no creed to realise that it is the Beautiful Gate of the Temple: makes them admit the meaning, if only as a practical necessity, of the hebraic injunction as to removal of shoes. Those who rebel grow fewer year by year, and many now willingly render western homage, entering bareheaded. Within, where the gloom of the groves seems to have found a permanent habitation, there is sanctuary from the sun. Then gradually, as the eye gets accustomed, through the shadows appears such a wealth of splendid decoration, that it is practically impossible to decipher, much less to remember any of it. Beyond the temple the shrine; and beyond the shrine flights of stone steps in massive masonry of cunning setting, leading into the woods upon the hill, where in their perfect calm is the tomb of Iyeyasu, first of the great dynasty of Tokugawa Shoguns. This is Nikko of the Hills.

The other picture differs in all its essential details. Vast courtyards of silence, full of stone and bronze lanterns, votive offerings of the daimyos to the memory of their chief, set in a little park, an oasis of peace in the heart of the busy city, from which the sounds of traffic come in a subdued, almost reverent, murmur, as of a far-away world. A latticed screen shuts out still more that strenuous world, through the gates in which, heavy with wreathing dragons, you pass to the temples and the shrines of other Shoguns of the famous dynasty, and beyond them, as at Nikko, to their quiet tombs. This was Shiba of the Plains.

Never endowed by nature with allurements to the time-tied traveller, Shiba at no time attracted so many visitors as Nikko, and so had few funds to draw upon to prevent its buildings from falling upon evil days. Many travellers pass Tokyo by in their rapid rush to the well-known sights; it has almost fallen out of the beaten track, so that the cunning curio dealers have departed to spread their wares in more likely places. Perhaps not a tenth of the crowds who went to Nikko had ever seen, many probably had never heard of, Shiba. To them the news of its destruction meant nothing; but to those who had passed hours of delight in the spacious courtyards, who had felt the charm of its temples and yielded to the fascination of the place, it meant almost a personal disaster, so greatly was it held in affectionate remembrance. I saw, after many years, the Shiba Temples before their passing, and noted sadly the progress of decay; but the charm still hung round them; only the jangling of bells as the tramcars passed, jarred upon the ear, and disturbed the city's murmur. The spirit of the place still lived and spoke with its old grace, awakening memories, more easily indeed than the spirit of Nikko could emerge through the brilliant coating of fresh colour, glistening lacquer, and new gold.

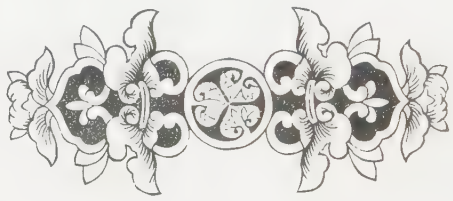
It is no imaginary spirit that I have conjured up in calling these temples to the mind. The gradual transition from the sumptuous decoration of the temple to the perfect peace of the tomb typified the passing of the prince from the restless splendour of the palace to the peace of the world beyond. All that art-labour could do enhanced the gorgeousness of the temple. Screens and sliding panels painted or carved by the most famous artists of the day stood in array in its halls; colours in marvellous harmonies, or splendidly discordant, lavish expenditure of gold, wealth of design, lacquer beyond compare, adorned them. But art in her more suggestive and mystical mood, found in the quiet sea and in the clouds, the most appropriate ornament for the gateway to the other life. In the graveyard even the sacred symbols, which hold so large a place in the decoration of the temples, give way to emblems suggestive only of repose.

This, as it seemed to me, was the spirit of the place, the genius which guided the hands of the artists who gave of their best without grudge of time, and who realised, as I think no other artists have ever realised, the place which decoration properly holds in the scheme of existence. To appeal to the imagination, to fill the mind with suggestion, to alternate playful fancy with more serious thought, to infuse into ornament a meaning, grave or gay as the occasion may demand, that those who pass by shall carry with them some little recollection of that meaning, and of the story which the priest and artist had to tell.

That beyond the symbolism which is at the foundations of much of their art, beyond that graceful imagination which made play with all that nature ever created and pressed it into service, there were a multitude of other influences at work is abundantly apparent. What those influences were which lay beyond the common stock of eastern life and Buddhist religion, and what the manner of their coming to Japan, are questions which I do not propose to discuss. It is evident that the arts of Europe, of many periods and many countries, reached the temple designers and influenced their work, in a way which the early trading settlements do not altogether account for. But the extraneous search for the origin of things is not altogether profitable, and I propose only to study the things themselves.

It is, however, inevitable that the historic relationship between Greece and India, and so between Greece and China, should be referred to in the course of these studies: for art, history's most accurate registrar, has traced upon the ancient walls of both a common design; and from this fact many conclusions may be drawn as to the origin of things, at a time when the only known exchanges were the crowded bazaars and the silent desert. I may premise at

once that these conclusions are not altogether in accord with those which are current among the learned; but for the moment, I do not propose to dogmatise further than this, that the art of the Japanese temples developed in the temples themselves. Apart from the well-known symbols, certain fundamental and elementary designs were used here, as they were used in all other branches of Japanese decorative art—they were the indispensable formulas; but on them, and often irrespective of them, a separate and distinct art arose, engendered simply by the desire to beautify the shrines of the great dead. I have found it nowhere else in Japanese art in the simplicity of use as in the temples; it was the like link between art and a religion which put the dead in the highest place, and it seems to have been deliberately excluded from the ordinary adornments of every-day life. But in the temples, every square yard, foot, or inch of available space, seen and unseen, as the Japanese way is, was literally smothered with ornament: carved, painted, inlaid, in high relief, and low relief, in woven silk and chased metal, produced by every means which human skill and loving labour could devise for the making of things so beautiful that they should be worthy of a place in a shrine of worship.



THE DECORATION OF FLAT SURFACES

The temple decorators seldom allowed the smallest space of wall or floor to go without its appropriate ornament: loved rather to devote to it the greatest possible amount of labour. Time was not of the essence of their contract, which was life-long, the living wage being guaranteed practically in perpetuity. Failing powers did not terminate the agreement, for the arts and handicrafts were hereditary, and the son was ready to take the father's place. If art is long, life in old Japan was even longer.

Thus the art-idea which inspired their work came to be an abhorrence of plain flat surfaces, and they adopted the diaper as a means of decorating them. The diaper does not seem to be an universal form of surface decoration, and other forms are apt to be mistaken for it. There is the reiterated design, where some ornament is arranged methodically over the surface, but without any coherence. Of this many of the Persian designs given by Owen Jones in his "Grammar of Ornament" (pl. 44) are typical. If we substitute "sprinkling" for methodical arrangement, this form of decoration was and is much used by the Japanese, though not I think in their temple work. Then again there is tile-work, which, as it was practised by the Moors, was a species of mosaic, each element of the design being composed of individual tiles of small size. The modern style of this work, in which large uniform tiles are used, at its best, limits its designs to one tile, so that the work becomes the means by which the design is reiterated. But a more or less continuous design is often adopted running over a large area, several tiles being used, and so tile-work approaches the diaper; but its chief characteristic is wanting, the treatment of the surface as a whole, either by interlacing lines repeating at regular intervals the principle figure which gave the diaper its special character, or by a series of crossing lines which divided the surface into a number of similar spaces in which line or floral ornaments were placed. Diapers prevail in almost every form of Japanese decorative art, but tessellated work is I believe unknown.

The most primitive diaper is composed of interlaced lines in a manner suggested by straw-plaiting, and known to us as the "basket-work" pattern. This will be seen in its simplest form in fig. 12 (pl. 6). A more elaborate form

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occurs in fig. 1 (pl. 4). This interlacing, though it has the appearance of simplicity, is complicated in a manner peculiarly Japanese. There are eleven threads, plaited in two groups of three and one of five, the length of the longest being eleven "thread-breadths." The difficulty in at once following the construction of the design arises from the fact that the groups of five short threads are opposite both the medium and long groups, which have together six, so that the last of the long threads has to be continued into the first of the opposite medium group.

But the charm of the temple diaper-work is due not merely to such dexterous intricacy of design, of which we shall see many examples, but to the manner in which they were wrought. In the large majority of examples of line diapers which I have seen the lines are deeply cut with a triangular gouge, with the result that they scatter the light in all directions, the effect becoming more and more bewildering as the designs increase in intricacy; so bewildering indeed, that in the sunlight a gold panel in a temple door corruscates, and the design is almost lost in the glitter of light.

Sometimes these line diapers are left without further ornament, as in many of the examples given in the Diaper plates (4 to 8); but they are often used as a background on which an independent design is placed. A very charming effect frequently used in the Nikko temples is a white diaper with small brown wood ornaments set on it, as in fig. 3 (pl. 4), and fig. 23 (pl. 8).

I have been much puzzled how best to convey the effect of these diapers as they actually appear. A mere outline of the design would give no effect at all, and would hardly explain it. I have therefore made the illustrations take the form of sketches of light and shade; and I must ask my readers to imagine, in spite of imperfect drawing, the triangular cutting of the lines, one side being in light and the other in shadow.

One other point should be noticed. The carver-designer has one element more to work with than the painter. In addition to varying length and breadth of line, straight and curved, and angle of inclination, he has thickness of his material, wood, with which he gets real instead of artificial depth, and therefore he can make great play with real shadows. Such a design as fig. 21 (pl. 8), depends for its effect mainly on varying thicknesses of wood, both for the cross pieces and the central ornaments. We shall come across this effect again in the lattices, plates 13 to 15.

Reverting to the diapers, the next in order of simplicity is one which is formed by dividing the surface into lozenges, each containing a series of smaller ones—a linear adaptation of the Chinese "nest" of boxes; terminating, as in

fig. 23 (pl. 8), with a single dot, or as in fig. 3 (pl. 4), with four small lozenges arranged lozenge-wise. This latter idea becomes a substantive design in the alternate divisions of fig. 18 (pl. 7).

The "nest" is frequently used to break up surfaces by grooving: in a simple manner in the ornaments at the lozenge-points in fig. 16 (pl. 7) and fig. 20 (pl. 7), and in a more elaborate manner in the hexagons in fig. 19 (pl. 7). In fig. 17 of the same plate, the idea of the grooves, though it appears to be the same, is in reality quite different. Here the suggestion is of broad bands of silk surrounding the central flower, looped and knotted at the points of the central hexagon, and the grooves are the folds of the silk.

But many of the more complicated diapers, and there is a long series of them to be specially studied presently, are based on the religious symbols of the East, formed of elementary arrangements of lines. The priest, past-master in art and craft, saw in them a means of reminding the curious, who came to admire without a pause for worship, of the eternal verities to which these symbols gave formal expression; and art, having once pressed them into service, evolved from them designs ever growing in intricacy. This too served the purpose of the priest; for the involutions of the design arrested attention, and then the symbol gradually evolved itself from the maze of lines, compelling notice from the mere fact that at first it lay concealed.

Although the more complete study of these symbolic diapers must be deferred for the present, a few examples of them are given now, because they hold so large a place in the surface decoration of the temples, and in order to shew their general effect and the artistic methods in which they were treated. Figs. 8, 9 and 11 (pl. 4), are three examples of diapers based on the *Pakwa* symbol, the component elements being raised pieces of wood, triangular in 8 and 11, and flat in 9. Fig. 7 in the same plate is based on the *Svastika*, as also figs. 6 and 10, and fig. 2 (pl. 4). Their construction is complicated, and the explanation of it must be deferred; it should be noted at once, however, that there is a continuity of line in them which differentiates them from the more simple "nest" of lozenges already referred to (fig. 3, pl.4).

The manx-like form on which figs. 4 and 5 of plate 4 are based at first sight also seems to be symbolic. It was however suggested by the form which results from the intervening spaces between a series of hexagons spaced at regular intervals, which is shewn in a Persian diaper given by Owen Jones, (pl. 44, fig. 15); or by diagonal plaiting crossed by a perpendicular thread, as in the Chinese diaper also figured by Owen Jones (pl. 59, fig. 34)

In fig. 4 all the elements are turned in the same direction; but in fig. 5, every alternate row is inverted, the properties of the hexagon rendering this possible. These two designs have some affinity with the "nest"-work of fig. 3; there is, however, this difference between them: that whereas in the "nest," the grooved figures diminish from the outside, in figs. 4 and 5 they work outwards from the central figure.

But while the priest availed himself of symbols for the double purpose of inventing religious *memoria technica* and of creating ingenious artistic devices, he was not slow to see and use the beautiful decorative forms which nature suggested; and here he found a very treasure-house replete with beauty and suggestion of graceful form.

In adopting nature's suggestions he did of course what all other decorators have done, and he devised, inevitably, a four-petalled figure, used in fig. 18 (pl. 7), and in fig. 25 (pl. 8), much resembling, if not identical with those which had developed in other systems of art. Indeed he almost touched, though how far independently is another matter, some of the classical forms and scroll-work of the West, of this I shall give some examples hereafter.

But there is a distinctive character in this branch of eastern art, which arises from the different floral forms to which the artists had recourse, rather than from any peculiar method of treatment. The pæony and the chrysanthemum are largely used, for they are flowers to which special attention is given in the East. Of these figs. 16 and 20 (pl. 7) are typical. In fig. 12 (pl. 6), the more rigid Chinese form based on the pæony will be seen, of which there are many variations. Another very common floral form, with three petals and three sepals, is used in fig. 14 (pl. 6), and figs. 17 and 19 (pl. 7); but I am not very clear what flower is its original.

It will probably surprise many of my readers when I say that in fig. 13 (pl. 6), we have another design based on natural suggestion, for its rigid lines seem rather to place it among those produced by mechanical means of rule and compass. It is known as the "pine-design;" and a reference to plate 20, where a whole pine tree is treated conventionally, will make its evolution easy to understand. It belongs to the class of diapers which I have characterised as "light-distributors"; and when the pine needles are cut with the triangular gouge to which I have already referred, it is the most dazzling of them all. Fig. 15 (pl. 6), is a strip of the same design cut diagonally across; but its pine character has vanished, giving place to a star-like form, which is emphasised by the omission of every alternate spine of the original design, the space being left flat

and coloured. In fig. 14 of the same plate, this star-form is treated as an independent unit of design.

The introduction of floral forms into the spaces of the diapers, as in figs. 10 (pl. 5) and 12 (pl. 6), led to the creation of designs for surface decoration much less formal in their nature than the symbolic diapers; but in the fact that the surface was broken up into regular figures, into each of which were placed one or more recurrent devices, they fall naturally to be considered with the diapers. Fig. 16 and 20 (pl. 7), are taken from designs similar in their general nature to those in figs. 10 and 12; the only variation being in the subsidiary ornaments at the lozenge-points, which truncates them, and somewhat alters their character.

The hexagon, nature's mechanical figure, is also very frequently used, and is treated like the lozenge; that is to say, the design is composed of a series of hexagons like a honeycomb, each of which is filled with a floral form, as in fig. 17 (pl. 7): or one of them only, which is made the central figure, and is surrounded by a series of six hexagons containing a pure line design, as fig. 14 (pl. 6) and fig. 19 (pl. 7).

The pine-design (fig. 13, pl. 6), also naturally works into a honey-comb of hexagons; but it will be noticed that when the central point is taken in conjunction with the centres of the surrounding hexagons, a large 6-rayed star appears, constructed on the same principle as the star-form in the fillet of the design, fig. 15 (pl. 6).

Fig. 24 is a lozenge diaper in red laquer cut in low relief. I cannot say with certainty to what suggestion this very charming design should be attributed. It seems probable however that it is based on one of the folded papers which in Japan always accompany gifts.

Fig. 22 comes from a pillar in Shiba of brown lacquer; it is cut in very deep relief. In fig. 25 the floral figure is enveloped by seven zig-zag lines in outline, a form of decoration with which we shall become familiar when we come to study the lattices.

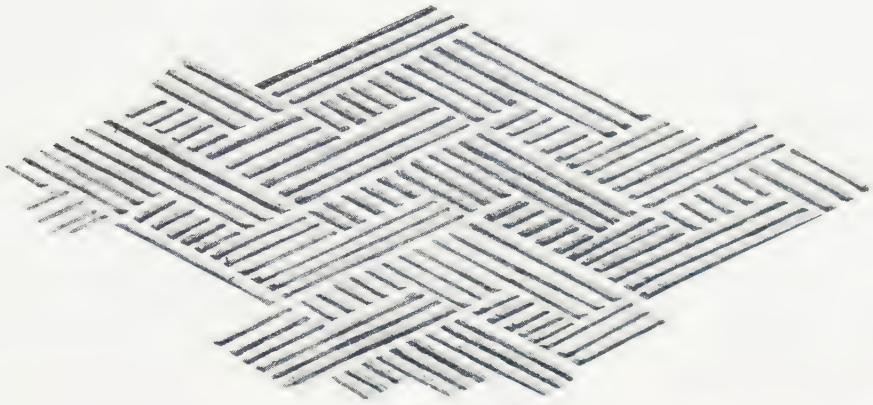


Fig. 1

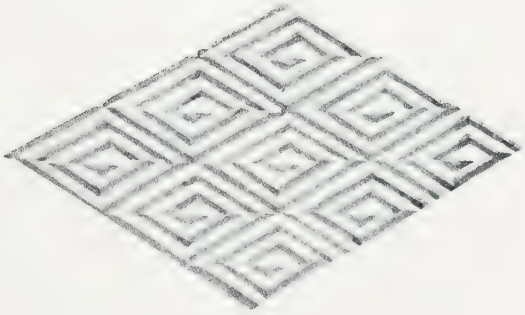


Fig. 2

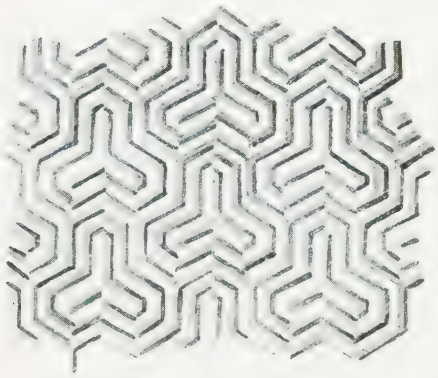


Fig. 4

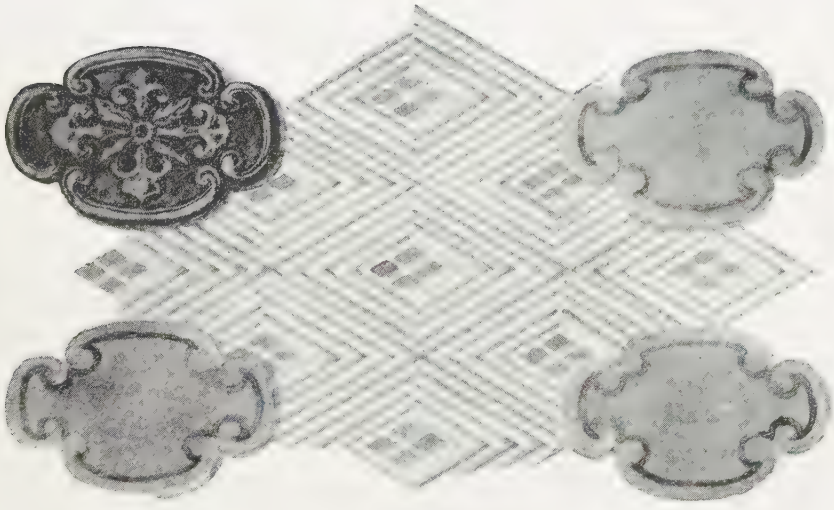


Fig. 3

Fig. 5

Plate 4

Diapers A

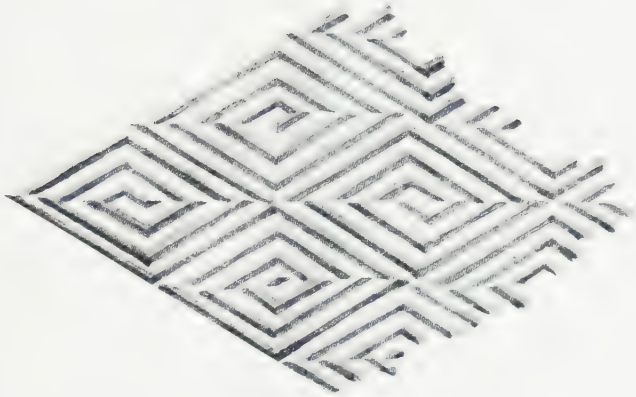


Fig. 6

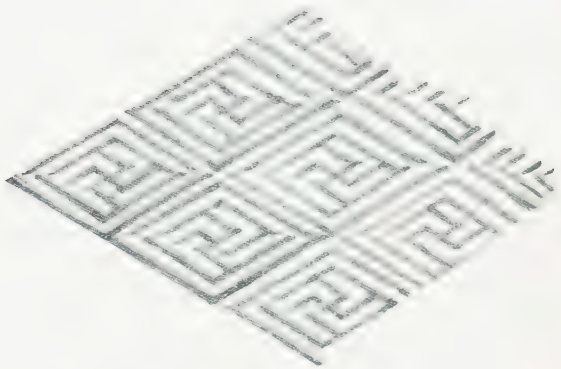


Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Fig. 10

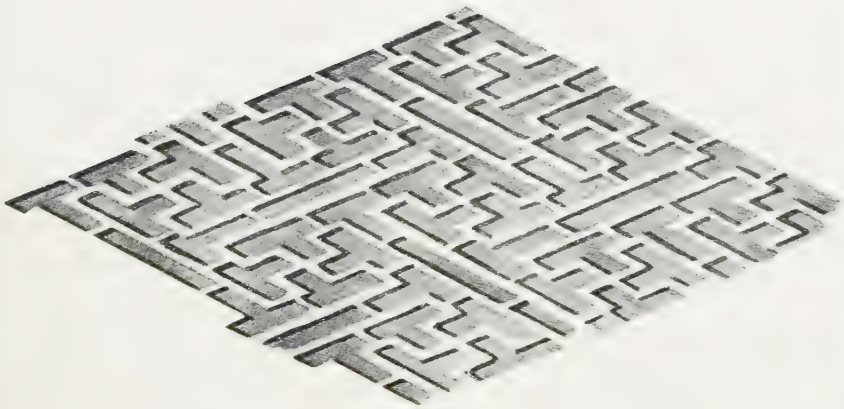


Fig. 9

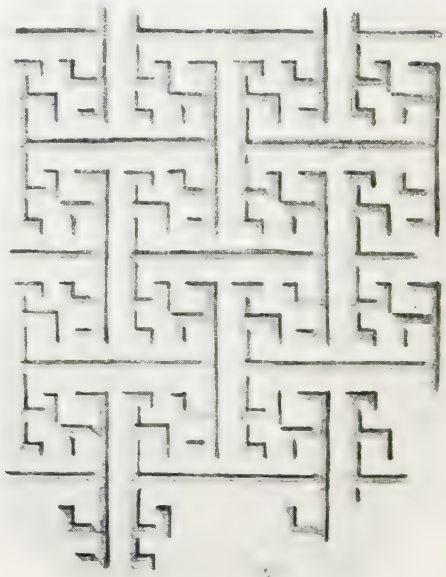


Fig. 11

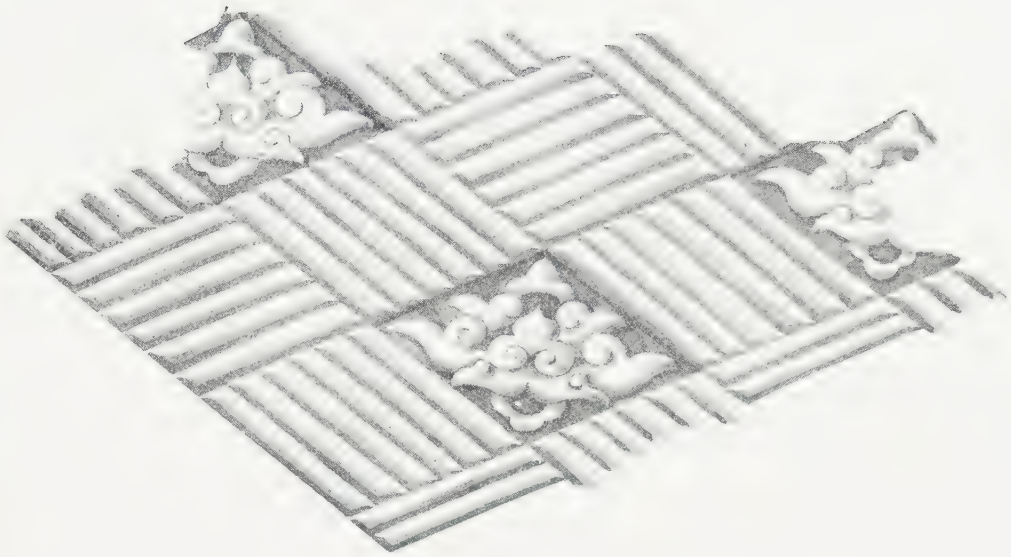


Fig. 12.

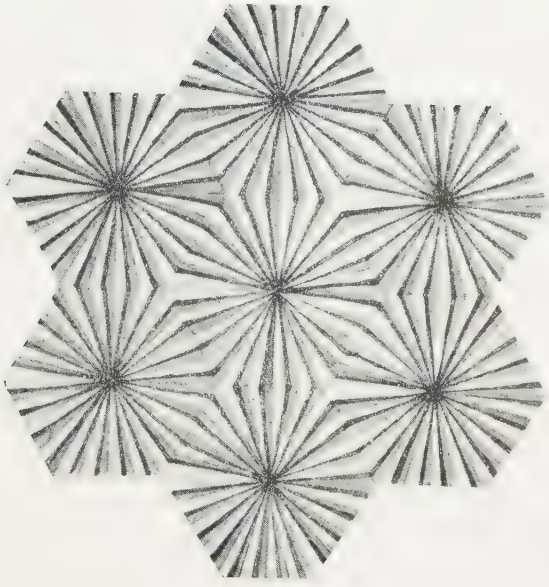


Fig. 13.

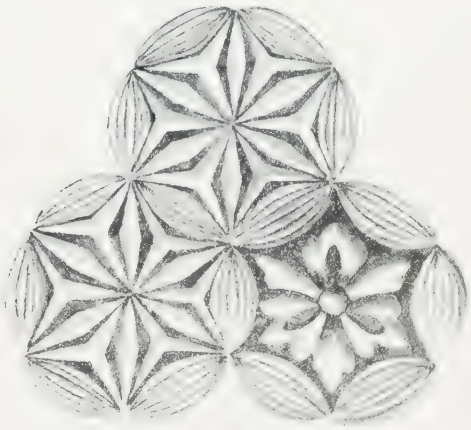


Fig. 14.

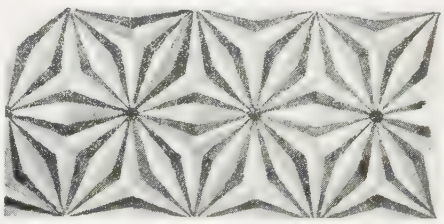


Fig. 15.

Plate 6. Diapers C.

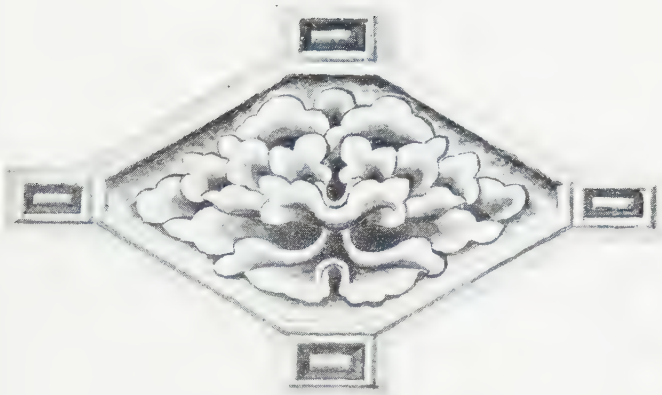


Fig. 16

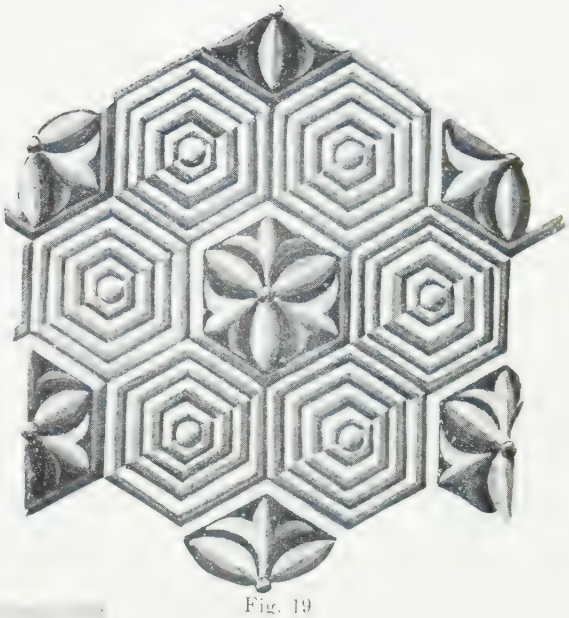


Fig. 19

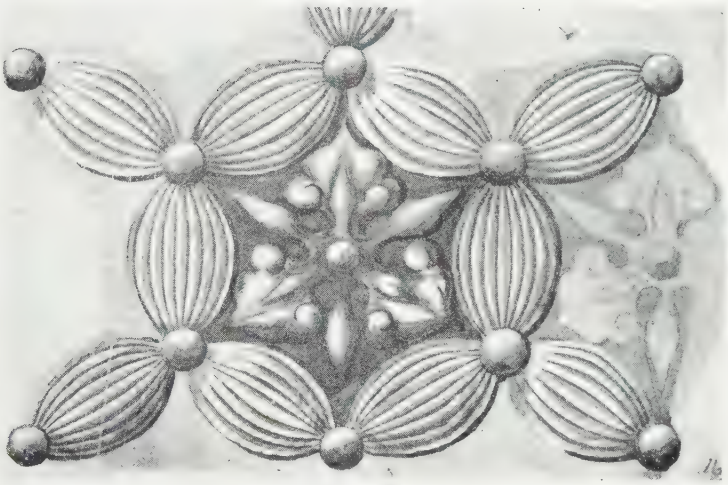


Fig. 17

Fig. 18

Fig. 20

Fig. 21

Fig. 22

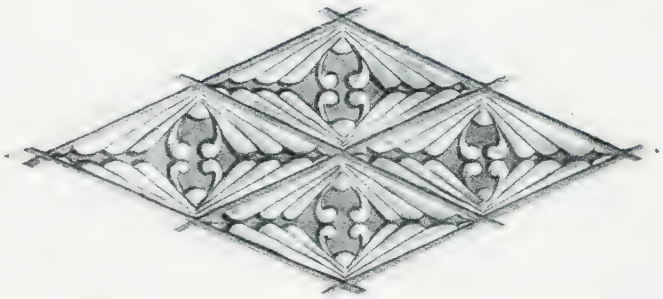


Fig. 24

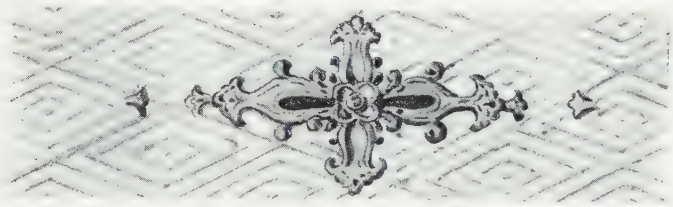


Fig. 23

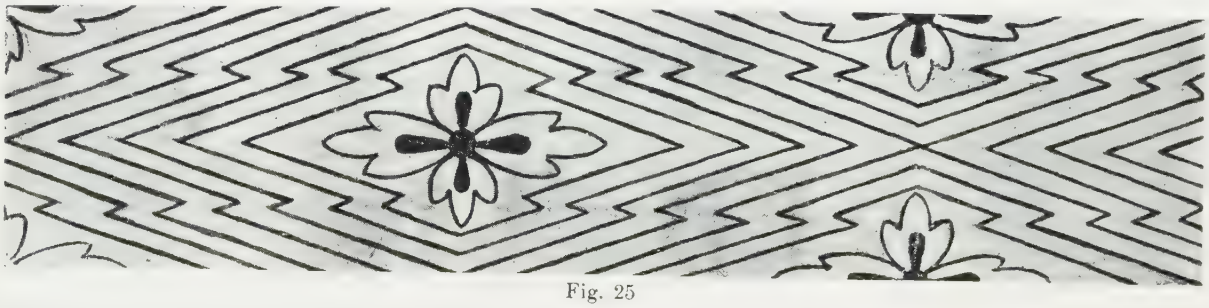


Fig. 25

Plate 8

Diapers E

WAVE AND CLOUD FORMS

But the temple decorator had not yet exhausted his sources of inspiration. He had used the symbols of religion to the full; he had pressed all nature's most beautiful handiwork into art-service; but there were still the waves of the sea, in restless motion or repose, and the ever-changing clouds, to suggest curves of beauty to his artistic imagination. In these he saw an expressive symbolism of life and death, which fitted in with his scheme of giving to art a deeper purpose.

The consideration of the wave designs follows that of the diapers in natural sequence, as they were also largely used for surface decoration. I think I am right in saying that they are, as well as the cloud designs, peculiar to the East; they certainly received the greatest elaboration in Japan. The constructive principle on which they are based has long been used in many countries, but the suggestion seems to have originated in the scales of a fish rather than in the wave. The Tudor architects obtained very light and graceful open-work by setting semi-circular tiles in rows one upon the other. It is not improbable that the wave design in this simple semi-circular form was used in Japan, though I do not remember having come across it. Its most common form is that given in figs. 1 and 4 (pl. 9). The wave curves are segments of circles, one-third of the circumference, the centres being at the inscribed hexagon-points of the series immediately below. The inner circles are concentric. These subsidiary lines constitute another point of difference between the wave and the "fish-scale." I speak with hesitation, but I think I am right in saying that the wave is never found without them; they are the ripples on its surface, and much of the charm of the design is to be attributed to them. In fig. 1, when worked in wood, these inner lines are incised with the triangular gouge like the diapers, and what I may call the "ripple-length" is equal throughout; in fig 4 the design is treated flat, and the ripple-lengths are unequal. The most elaborate form of the design that I know of is given in fig. 2 (pl. 9). The wave itself is semi-circular, but the ripples are formed from circles which are tangential at the base, which is of course the point of junction of two waves in the series next below. Both figs. 1 and 2 are made of plates of hammered bronze. They come from those last court-

yards in the Shiba temples where the tombs are, and there is no other ornament. It is symbolic of the calm of death, when the soul sets out on its voyage across the quiet sea. The symbolism is complete, the effect on the mind that of absolute repose.

The small wave design given in fig. 12 (pl. 10), is in red lacquer in low relief. It is less formal in its treatment, and is interesting on account of the foam-swirls at the base of each depression. The Japanese artists have never hesitated to give a definite form to wave-crest and spray in their pictures; and although the western eye gets accustomed to it with some difficulty, its very conventionalised form soon "speaks" to the mind and conveys the required impression.

The wave designs are not all drawn from the quiet sea; its turbulence suggested much beautiful work, which gave free scope to the vigorous curve drawing in which the Japanese excel. Of these the medallion in fig. 14 (pl. 11) is a good example. It comes from a white column in one of the Shiba temples, cut in very deep relief; the background is formed of a conventional design which is one of the cloud-forms.

The clouds although they have suggested formal designs such as this, are frequently treated in the manner of fig. 13 (pl. 11), in which there is an almost inevitable relation to the treatment of the foam-swirls of the waves, the cirrhus mass being broken up by inturned scalloped curves. The clouds in this figure are painted on a long beam in three shades of pink, blue and green, mixed with body colour, much in the manner of the missal illuminations of the West; the outer edges of the swirls are outlined with black or gold. The cloud-form is treated more rigidly in fig. 9 (pl. 10), which is in incised lines, gilded, on a dark brown beam.

Turning now to the more formal design, of which fig. 8 (pl. 11), is typical, it is difficult to say whether its origin is wave or cloud, nor is the matter one of very great importance, the principal feature, an inturned scalloped curve, being common to both. The design is cut very deeply, and shows the layers of lacquer, a kind of work with which collectors are familiar in small red lacquer boxes. It appears again in the upright beam in fig. 14, where it is associated with the same design in a more rigid form, serving as background to the wave medallion already noticed. This form is also used in outline in fig. 5 (pl. 9).

In fig. 3, the same involuted form appears grouped in masses of waves. This is carved in very deep relief and painted in body colour. In fig. 6 of the same plate, the same idea is worked out as an independent design, which is cut shallow, the inner scallop being slightly modelled. In fig. 7, the design is

drawn more vigorously, and is cut deeper into the wood; in some cases the panel is cut right through as in the very freely drawn wave with spray in fig. 15 (pl. 11). Fig. 10 (pl. 10) is a fanciful adaptation of the cloud-form, painted in the same way as fig. 13.

The most beautiful design of this class which I have seen is fig. 11 (pl. 10), where the crested wave appears in a triple-head figure enclosed in a trefoil border, the interstices being filled with the lines of repose taken from the wave design in its original form. The carving is in deep relief; the wave lines are gold on a dark blue ground, and the triple crests gold on a crimson ground.

Note on the construction of fig. 2 (pl. 9).

The following figure shows the principle on which the complicated wave design given in fig. 2 (pl. 9) is constructed, one of the waves being given complete with all its tangential circles. There are six inner circles, the ripples: the centres of each being on the lower half of the vertical diameter, falling on it a distance equal to half the breadth of the distance between the tops of the two circles, which I have called in the text the "ripple-length." The lower and shaded parts of the curves represent the side of the triangular grooving which is in shadow.

Fig. 1

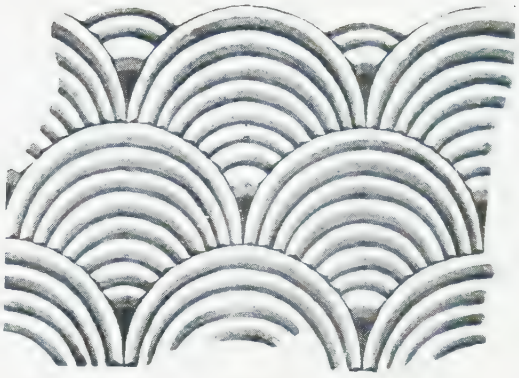


Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Plate 9

Waves and Clouds A

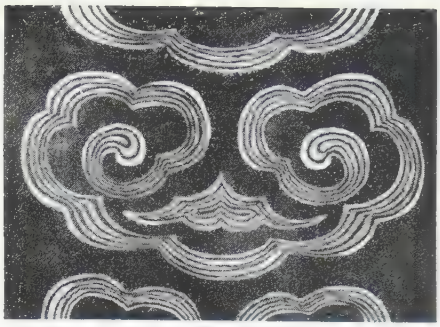


Fig. 8

Fig. 9

Fig. 10

Fig. 11

Fig. 12

Plate 10

Waves and Clouds B

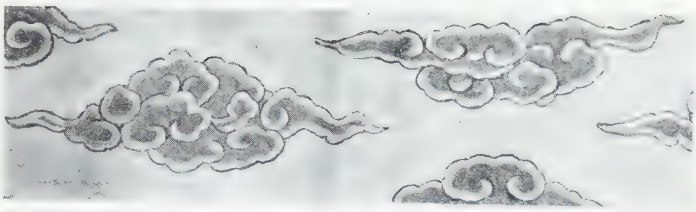


Fig. 13

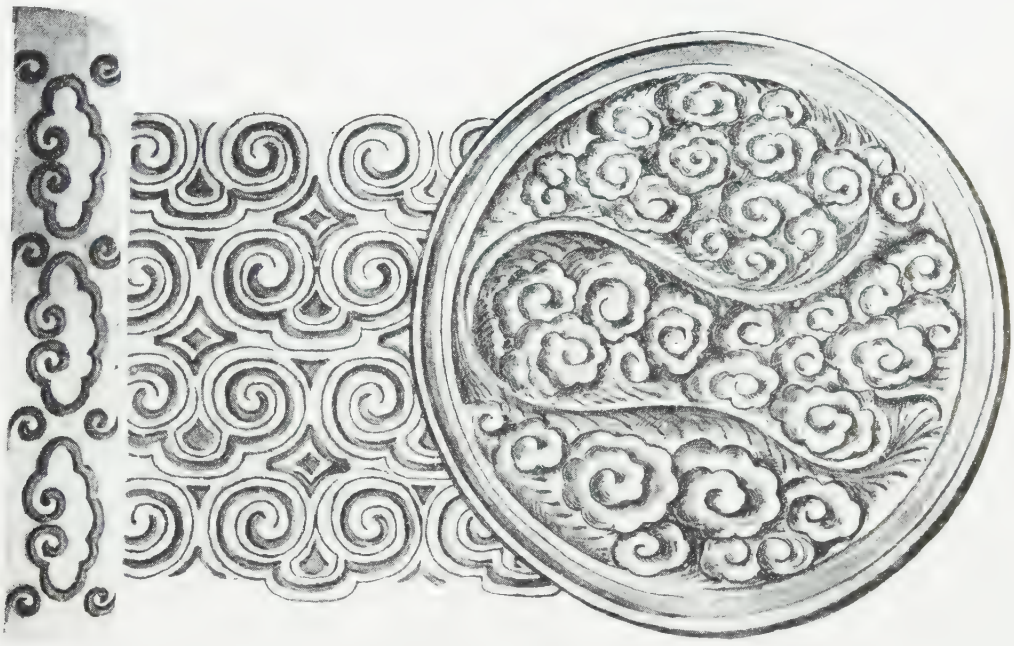


Fig. 14

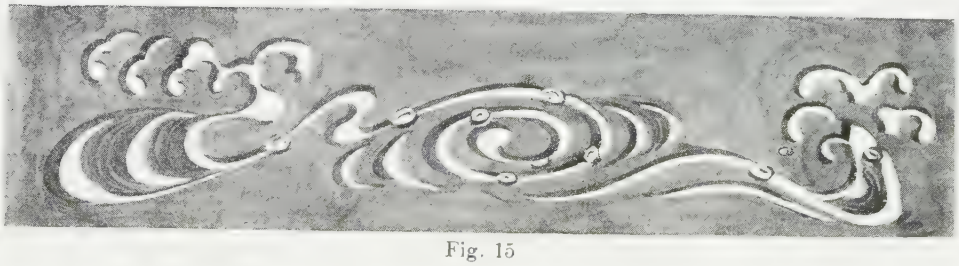


Fig. 15

Plate 11

Waves and Clouds C

LATTICE WORK

I come now to a very highly-developed form of decoration, which is used to a large extent for lattice-work in the temples, but of which I have found no trace elsewhere. This may be accounted for by the fact that the domestic architecture of the Japanese is so rigidly simple that it does not admit of much ornament, and even such public buildings as old Japan needed afforded no scope for its use. It is not symbolic, and has little affinity with anything that has already been considered. Nor is it suggestive, but is, with rare exceptions, pure line for line's sake; its special artistic virtue being its peculiarly effective adaptation to its object. I doubt whether it would, at first sight, be called Japanese; though in their individuality of conception and ingenuity of construction, the designs possess two at least of the characteristics of Japanese art.

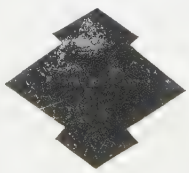
We must imagine the mind of the decorative artist exercised by the need for decorating, not a flat surface, but an open space; such a space, for example, as the sides of a temple gateway, which in form is not unlike an old English lych-gate. The result of his cogitation is that he fills it with a lattice or wooden grille, instead of with solid woodwork. The screens which surround the court-yards of the temples are solid only for about half their length; the upper part being usually composed of latticed panels. I believe this work to be unique. Open-work, in wood and other material, was often used in the architecture of other countries, of which the "fishscale" pattern, already referred to, is a typical example; but nothing approaching the Japanese lattices is to be found elsewhere.

Occasionally the designs overlap those of the diapers, as was indeed inevitable; but as a whole they stand apart, having no relation to any other form of ornament. The new conditions of the work inspired the artists to invent a new from of decoration, the most important feature of which is its dependence for its effect on the sunlight passing through the spaces of the design, the result of which is to emphasise their form, so that in some cases the eye is attracted to them more than to the surrounding design of the woodwork. Occasionally these lattices are placed on a background of red lacquer, which emphasises the space-shapes even more than the sunlight.

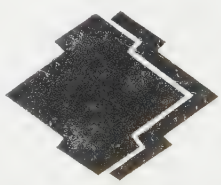
I have considered these lattices on the method of a continuous growth or natural development which seems to me to be clearly traceable. A most complicated design may, of course, be invented without being developed from more simple ones; but when a natural order is discoverable it is useful to note it, it may be only for the purposes of study; but it is also at least probable that the gradual development of the more elaborate designs was along these lines, which are those not only for least resistance, but of greatest facility.

The simplest designs are composed merely of crossed lines, of which fig. 1 (pl. 12) is an effective example. It is not made on the crossed-lath principle of our garden trellices; the pieces of wood join in the same plane and do not overlap. But even with such poor materials it will be seen that the commonplace repetition produced by cross lines at regular intervals is avoided. From this we pass at once into the region of ingenious and obscure construction. The design given in fig. 2 of the same plate, made of crossed zig-zag lines, is very prevalent in all branches of Japanese art; perhaps the lightning suggested it, perhaps it was worked out in playful fancy. The effect is striking though somewhat irritating to the eye; it cannnot travel smoothly along them, but is perpetually being jolted, so to speak, off the rails. It cannot even follow one line continuously, but is perpetually being diverted by some notch in the crossing lines. The design sets up cerebral fidgets and endless reflexions as to how it was drawn. If there be among my readers an architect who is vexed by a lazy pupil, I would suggest that he should be set to work to draw the design in fig. 2,—that in fig. 3 would indeed be better still—worrying out the method of construction for himself.

But the eye very soon gives up the idea of following the lines, and rests on the spaces which lie between them. The lines indeed are so subordinated in the general effect to the space-figure, that you might imagine the order of things reversed, the spaces filled by solid wood, the lines of the woodwork left blank. This shape (fig.A), is perhaps somewhat bizzarre; but it is not unpleasing, and it is a recognised device in Japanese heraldry. In the crest of one family it appears in the twin form given in the accompanying figure (B).

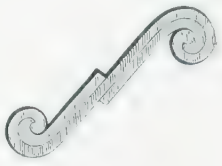


A



B

I believe this zig-zag design to be essentially Japanese; but the idea of the broken line occurs in this well-known form in Tudor Architecture. It must be set down as one of those occasional and curious resemblances, which are, I think, inevitable coincidences, between the decoration of the East and West.



The method on which the Tudor figure is constructed is identical with that of the Japanese, as is shewn by the thin lines in the drawing. The notch or break bears a certain definite proportion to the breadth of the main line, so that the continuation of the upper edge of this line becomes the lower edge of one of the lower sections: the next or the next but one, according to the depth of the break.

The zig-zag design appears in a triple form in fig. 3 (pl. 12); it is most dazzling and bewildering; it occurs also in outline in fig. 25 (pl. 8), with no less than seven lines. Many variations are also produced by changes in the angle of inclination of the lines and of wood-thickness; and beautiful effects obtained by the use of gold and colour. In the lattice given in fig. 3, the surface is gold, and the thickness of the wood crimson.

A glance at the illustrations on plates 12 to 15 will shew how the thickness of the wood comes into play as an elemental feature of the designs, the depth giving, as I have already pointed out, real instead of artificial shadows. The effect is also heightened by the light coming through the other parts of the design, sharpening the edges of the wood. When very thick wood is used, as in fig. 4 (pl. 12), where it is an inch and a half thick, and gilded, the lattice has a very massive appearance. The ornament and the lattice bars are in this instance flush; but this is somewhat unusual.

The next step in our artist's upward path of excellence would be the very natural one of designing an ornament for the lozenge spaces of the lattice; and he also very naturally had recourse first to the standard four-petalled floral forms. The one used in fig. 4, with the scalloped petal seems indeed to have been specially created for the zig-zag lozenge, so beautifully does it fit into its crannies.

In fig. 5, we have a simple lattice of triple bars, the lozenges being filled with a deeply cut ornament. It will be noticed that the intersection of the lattice bars produces the four little lozenges arranged lozenge-wise, which was noticed in fig. 3 (pl. 4) of the diapers. The ornament in fig. 5 is not flush with the bars, but has the appearance of being imbedded in the design. It is treated in the same way in fig. 6 (pl. 13), which is one of the most graceful of this class, the effect, in spite of the heavy wood used for the bars, being very light.

The next idea which, as I imagine, came into our artist's brain is given in fig. 7 (pl. 13). Instead of introducing an ornament into the lozenges, he has ornamented the bars themselves by the introduction of thin slips of wood fastened to the inside, which obliterate the lozenge and produce a novel internal shape, less formal and less wearisome to the eye than reiterated undecorated lozenges. This is a simple illustration of the effect alluded to above, produced by different wood-thicknesses. The inner pattern is gold and the bars black.

The idea of introducing these thin slips of wood as an element of the designs having once been originated, it was rapidly developed; and we come almost naturally to the very ornamental lattice given in fig. 8 (pl. 13). The point to be specially noticed, in view of the subsequent developments of the idea, is that the internal slips on the four sides of the lozenge, are identical in shape; and therefore correspond on both sides of the crossing bars. This results from the fact that the lozenge is rectangular and rectilinear; but when lattice-bars are inclined at an acute angle modifications in the shape of internal slips become necessary.

These modifications will be readily understood if we imagine the lattice, fig. 8, to be made of india-rubber, and to be stretched lengthways till the horizontal angles approximate to 30 degrees, which is the angle of grace. The internal ornaments will then become distorted, as in fig. 9. For purposes of construction the following explanation will, I think, be clear. The four internal slips are the same shape, and any two adjacent ones are merely the opposite pair reversed. One interesting feature of this design is that the space-shape corresponds in its general configuration with the lozenge ornament fig. 6. One other point should be noted; the reversing process produces the greatest possible want of correspondence in the pairs of slips on the opposite sides of the lattice bars. This lack of symmetry is even more marked in fig. 10 (pl. 13), where the zig-zag lattice is used, with a foliated scroll for the internal slips. These slips are heavier than those in figs. 8 and 9, and the space-shape is much reduced in consequence; but I think it will be clear that in this class the space-shapes hold such an important position in the design that the actual lattice almost becomes the adjunct rather than the principal feature.

But this lack of symmetry gives rise to another curious effect, which has originated yet another development in these designs. When the eye does concern itself with the woodwork, ignoring the space-shape, it rests on the large design made by four lozenges with their slips at the intersection of the cross bars, which is in the form of a highly ornate St. Andrew's cross. It is however so distorted as to produce little effect. In order to bring this new feature into

greater prominence recourse was had once more to a rectangular arrangement for the cross bars, as in fig. 11 (pl. 14). In this design the principal feature is the foliated Maltese cross which springs from the centre of four of the lattice squares, the crosses themselves being arranged horizontally and diagonally. This lattice is composed of black bars, with blue slips, the thickness of both bars and slips being painted red.

Fig. 12 (pl. 14), is another very ornamental design of the same class, the bars making rectangular and rectilinear lozenges. The boldness of its curves required no adventitious aid to emphasise them, and the lattice is painted throughout in one colour, a vivid green. The internal slips are nearly flush with the bars, and the shadow lines therefore very slight.

One minor point in fig. 11 and 12 (pl. 14), must not escape attention. The slips, in addition to the principal cross-figure make also a subordinate cross, which alternates with it in the horizontal arrangement. It is composed of the meeting limbs of four principals, so that the foliation is set inwards. I have not come across any example in which this secondary figure is emphasised by central radiation; but use is made of this characteristic in the two sets of space-shapes in fig. 14 of the same plate.

In fig. 13, however, two different cross-forms are in fact introduced. The lattice itself is elaborated by the introduction of double bars alternating with single ones. The bars in this design are of thick wood, gilded; the slips are thin, giving deep shadow effects, and the two sets of crosses are emphasised by different colours, dark blue and vivid green, with the wood-thicknesses red.

In fig. 14 (pl. 14), we reach the last stage of development of the lattices. The angle of grace is reverted to, and the space-shape again predominates. It will be noticed that in fig. 12 the method of arranging the internal slips produced two different space-shapes; by reducing the size of the slips this feature is emphasised, and just as in figs. 11, 12, and 13, there are, as noted above, two sets of cross-figures, so in fig. 14 we get two sets of very prominent space-shapes arranged in horizontal lines. This design differs in its construction from figs. 9 and 10 (pl. 13), in one important particular. In those the internal slips were all of the same shape, and were merely inverted in order to complete the design on the opposite side of the lozenge; but this produced a lack of symmetry in the slips on the two sides of the bars. This feature is deliberately emphasised in fig. 14, where the internal slips of the alternate rows of lozenges are of different designs. They have however a "perspective" affinity, produced by the horizontal stretching process which I have imagined to have been applied to fig. 3, which would naturally elongate the initial curve or stem of the design of the slip.

The natural development is now exhausted. I add, however, a few noteworthy designs, some of which lie outside it.

In fig. 15 (pl. 14), pure line ornament for the internal slips has been abandoned in favour of the quatrefoil, which is the only floral form I have found used in lattice-work. The bars are reduced to a minimum in order to give a greater prominence to the quatrefoils, which are painted alternately bright blue and vivid green.

In fig. 16 (pl. 15), the principal figure, which has some affinity with Renaissance scroll ornament at its best, fills four of the lattice squares. In its convolutions it is based on that cunningly-balanced distribution of light and shade, to be hereafter referred to, which is one of the most distinguishing features of Japanese decoration.

In figs. 17 and 19, the circle appears for the first time in these lattices. Its infrequent use in this class of work is worthy of note, in view of the special position which, as we shall presently see, the circle holds in eastern art. It seems probable that these designs owe their origin to foreign sources; though whether they can be said to be so Romanesque in character that this origin would be immediately recognised is doubtful, for Owen Jones indicates geometrical mosaic as the salient feature of this style of ornament. It is a fact, however, that both these designs appear among Owen Jones's examples of Romanesque design as it developed from Byzantine; fig. 17 as fig. 20, and fig. 19 as fig. 35, of plate 30 of the "Grammar." In fig, 17, the lattice bars are black and very massive; the circles are deep blue, the floral ornament light blue, and the wood-thickness red throughout. In fig. 19, the circles are gold, and the ornament crimson, picked out with pink.

Fig. 19 is an elaborate chain-work design, which, though clever in conception, is hardly of first rank. The central ornament is, worthy of attention; it is in blue and red alternating with green and red; the chain in gold.

The last design, fig. 20 (pl. 15). comes from the panels of a gateway in Nikko. The ornaments in the hexagons are rather weak; but they do not force themselves into prominence, the eye being attracted more to the general effect of the massive red lacquer network, which is the setting for the central device, the crest of the Tokugawa Shoguns.

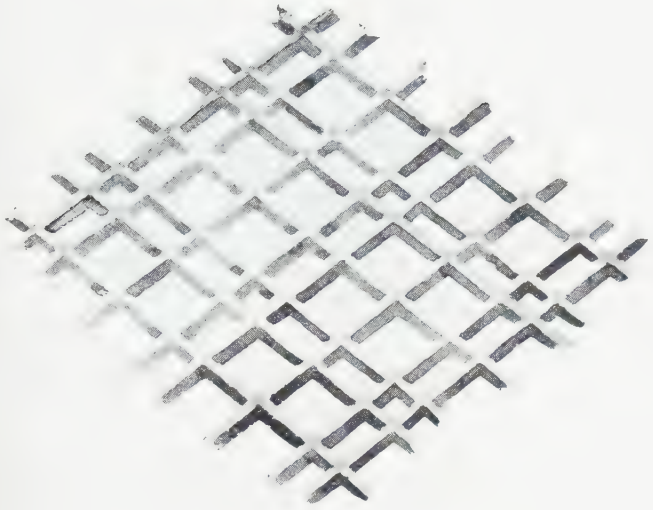


Fig. 1

Fig. 4

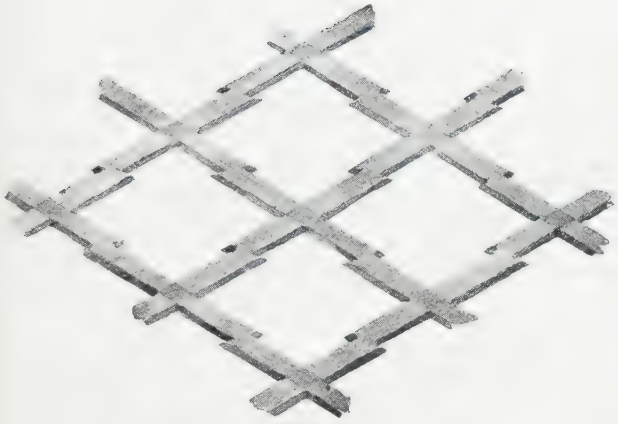


Fig. 2

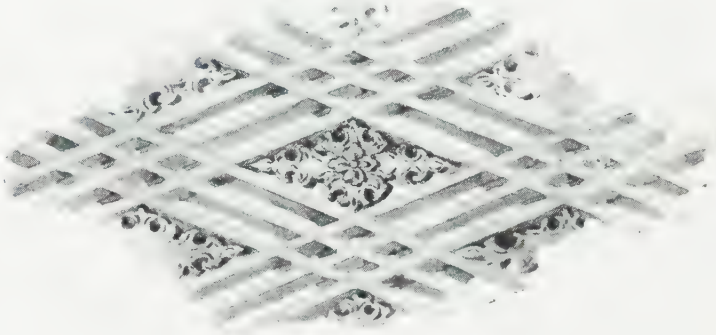


Fig. 5

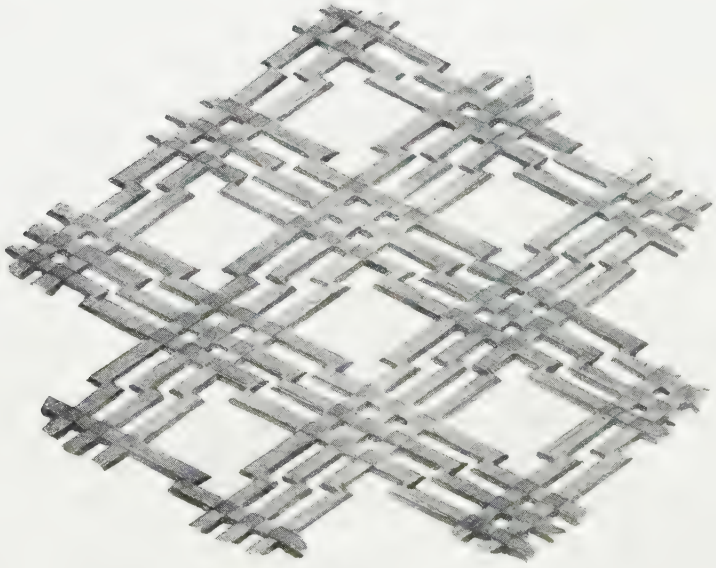


Fig. 3

Plate 12

Lattices A

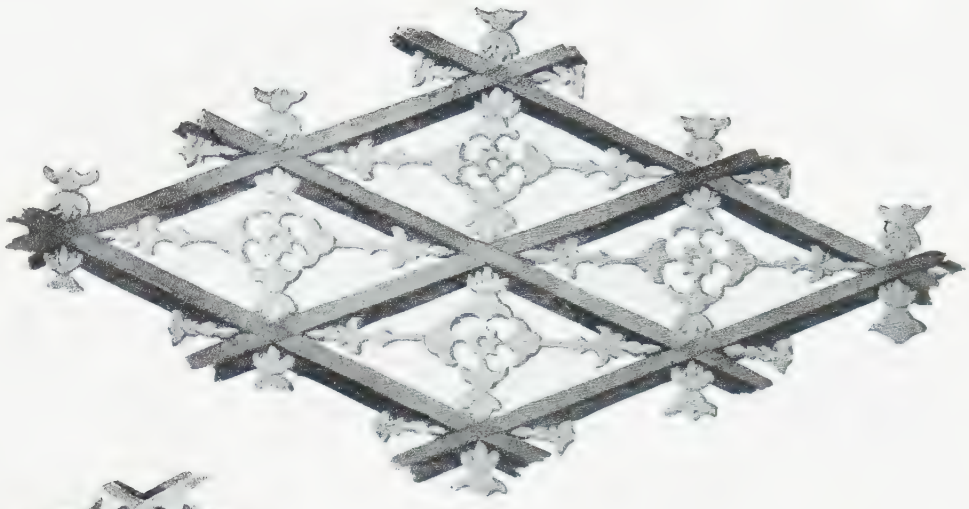


Fig. 6

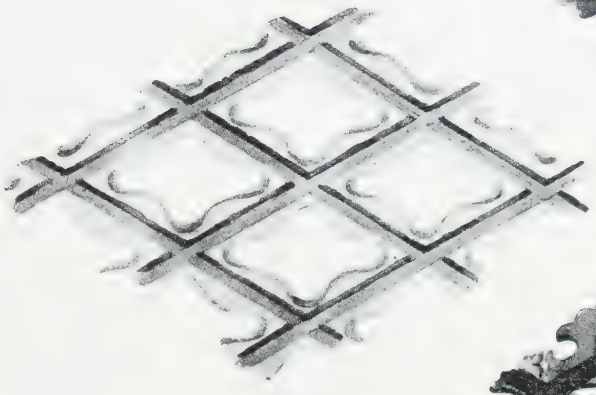


Fig. 7

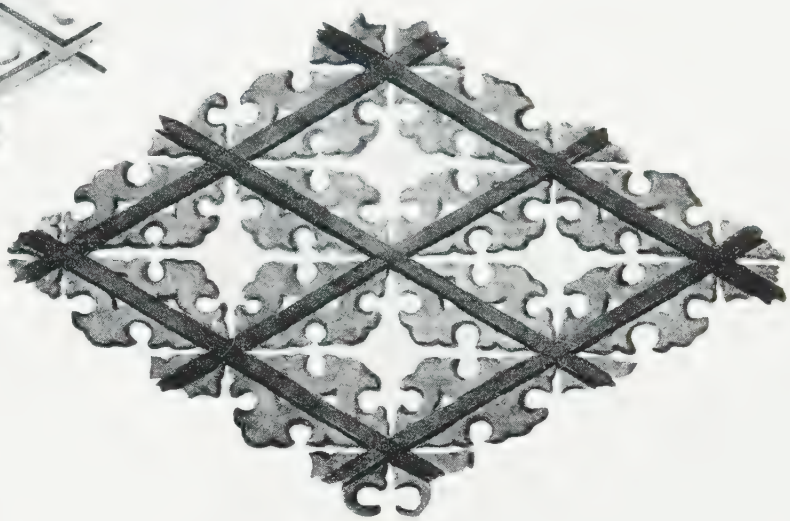


Fig. 9

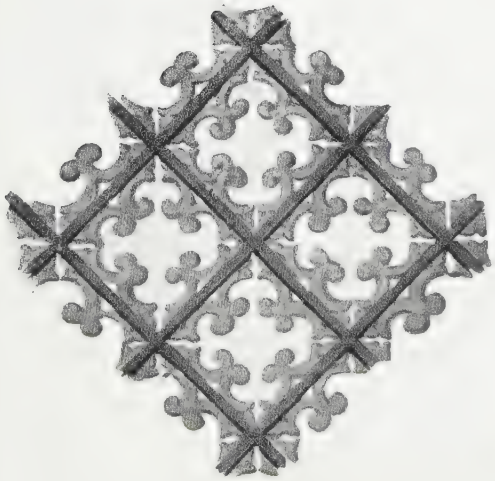


Fig. 8

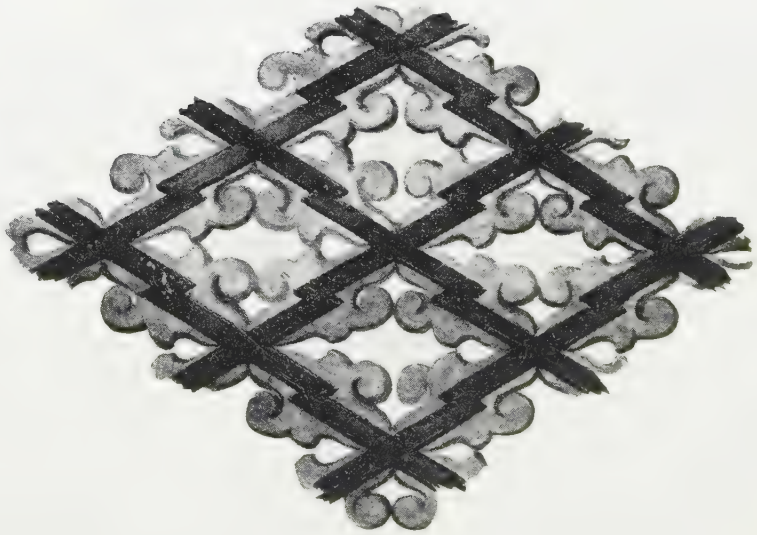


Fig. 10

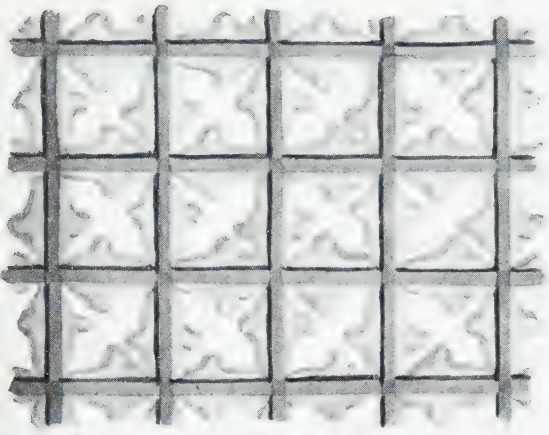


Fig. 11

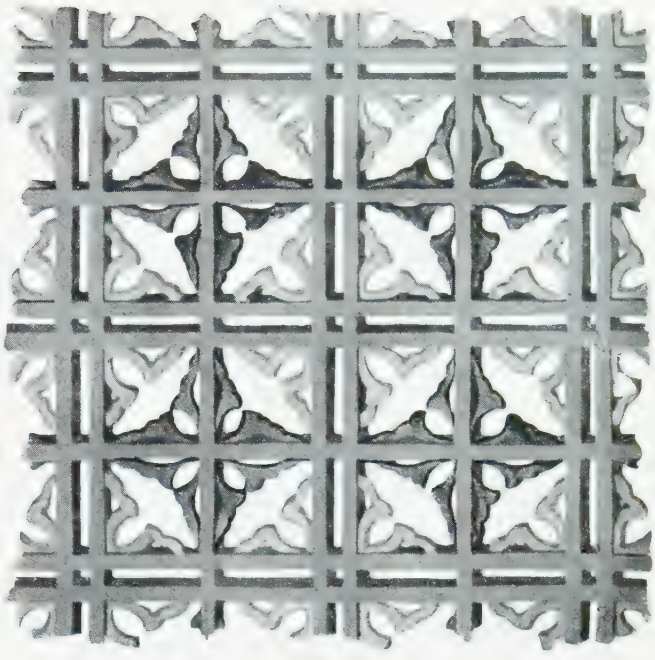


Fig. 13

Fig. 12

Fig. 14

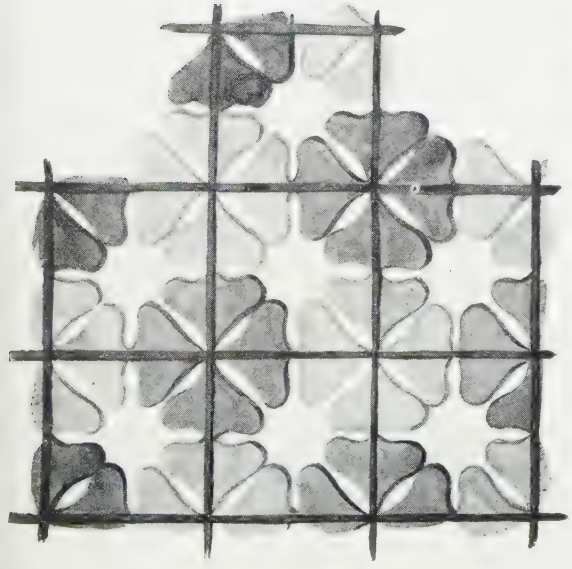


Plate 14 Fig. 15 Lattices C

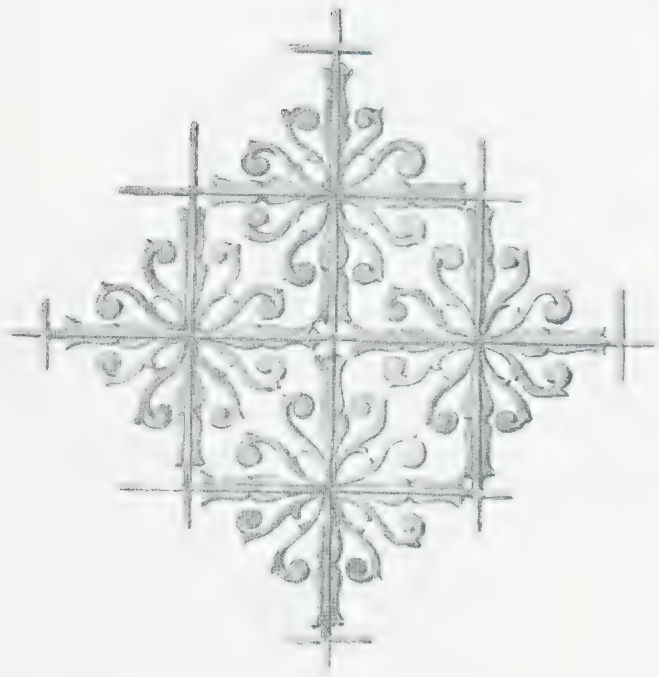


Fig. 16

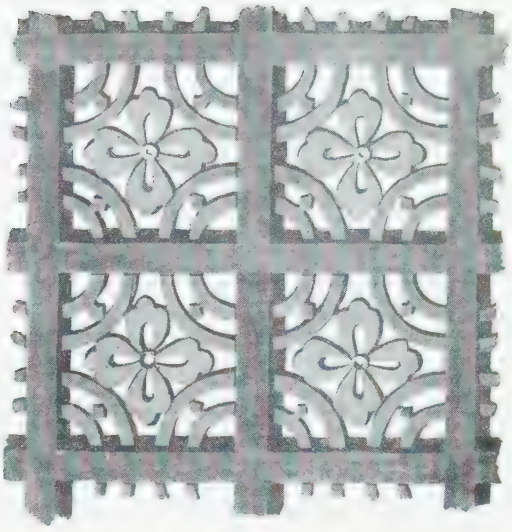


Fig. 17

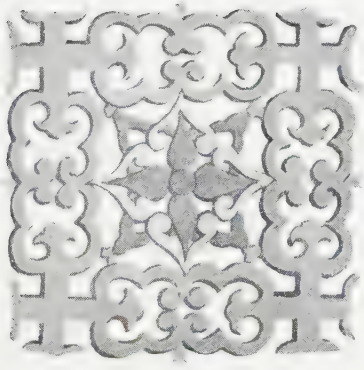


Fig. 18

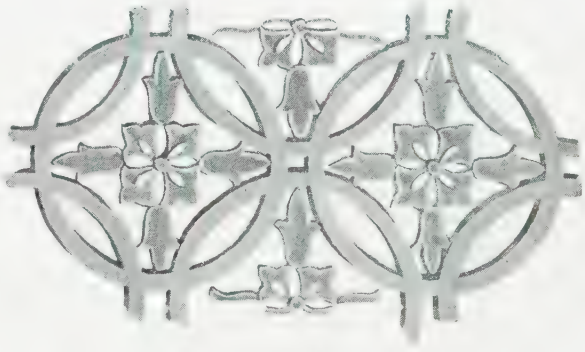


Fig. 19

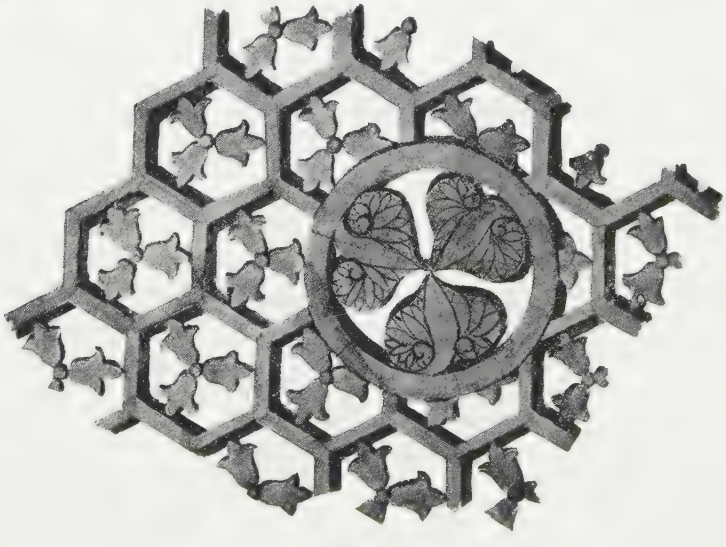


Fig. 20

Plate 15

Lattices D

THE DECORATION OF THE JAPANESE

Temple decoration has been put in the foremost place in this book because it is less known than any other form of Japanese art, and because it is of a higher order than decorative art in its more usual forms, and lies in great measure outside the better-known conventions. As everybody knows who has even the most superficial acquaintance with the country, art abounds through the length and breadth of it; it is part of the life of the people, manifesting itself in its every detail.

Without doubt, much of it with which we are familiar runs in grooves; tradition seems to have cast its iron hand upon it, convention to have gripped it by the throat. The flying swallow and the pensive crow: the cherry blossom and the pine branch, appear and re-appear, do duty alike in their pictures as in ornament for plates and bowls, for *inro* and sword-hilt, and for ladies' robes. And yet the charm by which it holds the West is its infinite variety. Of the many curious art-problems which Japan has set before us none so difficult to solve as this: how is it possible for convention and art-vitality so to co-exist? for the mere drudgery which it enforces should destroy all the germs of artistic instinct in its students, leaving few to become scholars, fewer still professors.

The necessity for more numerous and more rigid conventions than in the West arose in the first place from the overwhelming difficulty of the technique; in the second place from the enormous demand for journeymen artists. Art enters so largely into the conditions of life, even in its commonest forms and daily occurrences, that the supply of workmen could be kept up in no other way. There has been at all times a very holocaust of young men, their art-spirit crushed by the rigour of their apprenticeship, in order to satisfy the ceaseless demand for work of even average merit, their pittance not much more than sufficient to supply the daily rice. The art-students of Kensington know no such toil. Ten hours a day for many days to learn the trick of the flying wing; ten more on other days to know how much water the hinge of the brush must hold to catch the swelling fullness of the swallow's breast; ten more on other days to learn how, with the same brush, to put in the crisp lines for beak

and eye and claw. And in the end, more often than not, failure to come anywhere near to the high standard which the canon of Japanese excellence demands. Yet this stood always to the credit of the system, that men whose unknown names were legion went out into the world sufficiently dexterous to supply decoration for the common things that the people use, whose art-training in the school of convention put their work upon a level which was never so low as that of the journeyman artist-dauber of the West.

But again, convention had so large a grip of art, so pervaded it, that itself assumed an infinitely various character; and no attempt to summarise even the convention of any particular school could hope to be successful. And yet again, the art has so many different forms of expression, that the same subjects seem to take a different form, to have a different meaning, arising from their treatment and the medium in which they were executed rather than from their intrinsic merits as design.

This brings me to the most serious difficulty in dealing with Japanese decorative art: the definition of its limitations. In the East pictorial art is used as freely as in the West for purposes of ornament; but the line between representative and decorative art is not so easily drawn, because convention, which is the soul of decoration, enters so largely into the execution of Japanese pictures: in none more so than in landscape. But when the Japanese use pictorial art for decorative purposes it is in fact their pictorial art, and it conforms to the canons of that art. It is beside the point to say that those canons are of a low order compared with our own. It is quite possible to admit even that their pictures more nearly approach decorative art by reason of the crudeness of their conventions; for that again is beside the point. All the limitations, the faults as many consider them, of Japanese pictorial art spring from the imperfect means which the artists have at their command. You cannot do much with water-colours if you have nothing to paint on but blotting-paper; and the rapidly-absorbent paper or prepared silk on which the Japanese are compelled to paint their pictures is not very far removed from it. Hence an initial difficulty, which is responsible for nearly all of the peculiar qualities of their art, good as well as bad. The wonder is that they should have achieved so high a technique. I recommend anyone who is anxious to understand, to get a piece of Japanese paper and try to lay on a wash He will turn from his task a crosser but a wiser man, and be more lenient in his judgments in future.

The question here involved is an important one and deserves consideration for a short space, for it lies at the foundation of the subject in hand, and not every one holds the same views upon it.

The greatest purist among decorators would never deny that pictorial art may very properly be applied to the purposes of decoration; but he would insist, and rightly, that when it is so applied it should conform to the principles of pictorial art, that the work must be judged by its standards alone. There was a time when—perhaps it is so still—the paintings of Angelica Kauffmann made desert plates fetch a great price. To paint pictures on anything out of the common, on porcelain for example, rather than on canvas or paper, has always had a great attraction for many. Sevres porcelain owes almost as much of its value to the excellent work of the artists who painted the landscapes and the groups upon it, as to the fineness of its paste and the lustre of its colours. But a base form of pictorial work, work without artistic vitality, is not to be tolerated merely because technical difficulties stand in the way of getting good execution on clay. If I paint a landscape on a potter's vessel I shall not be forgiven its crudity, its lack of depth and light; nor if it be a human face, its vacuity, simply because of the difficulties which my material sets in my way. Admittedly the work is much more difficult than if I painted my subject on paper or canvas; but art is power, and if it succeed, I may, perhaps, look for greater praise for my picture, because of the great technical difficulties which I have overcome; but the attempt was of my own seeking and if it fail, I cannot insist that, by reason of them my art finds legitimate expression in a lower range of feeling. Nor, again, for art is long, can the length of time which work would occupy were it well done, be an excuse for doing it badly. If it is essential to my happiness to cover my walls with red roses and ribbons, and my ceilings with chubby cupids and all the winged hierarchy of artistic space, I may do so, and infringe no real or imaginary law. But the cost, if it be the work of men's hands, or the difficulty of getting good results, if it be processed, will not be an answer to kind friends who tell me that my variegated patches of colour are hideous and mere nothingness, or that my cherubs are up aloft in positions of anatomic impossibility.

The main objection to the use of pictorial art for decorative purposes has always seemed to me to be the deleterious effect which it must inevitably have upon the art of the designer and the decorator. It leads them to ignore the fact that there are canons applicable to their own art; and in the past it induced those monstrosities which the early Victorians delighted in—those paintings of flowers and animals, of human beings even, on plates and teacups, which were the merest daubs. As daubs even they were poor; for they did not come within measurable distance of the colour-plates of the Botanical Magazines which flourished at the beginning of the last century. The poor ladies who

worked at threepence a dozen had at least an accurately engraved flower or leaf to daub upon. But the familiar and gruesome bunches of pink roses tied with blue ribbons are as nothing compared with another horror which still dwells in my memory—a wall-paper on which was daubed a trellice with ivy growing all over it. Why anyone should have desired to make-believe that his drawing-room was an arbour I never could understand; but even admitting his aim to be admissible, the similitude was so poor that it would not have deceived the commonest garden spider. Decorative art in its lowest form supplies the means of obviating such terrible productions.

Let us turn for a moment to the pictorial art of Japan. Much of it depends for its charm on the simplicity of the means by which it produces its effects. It revels in suggestion. The works of one of the greatest of its schools is in great part in monochrome. The treatment of leaves and flowers often approaches very closely to the conventional treatment necessary to ornament. In these simple black and white pictures much of the detail, even of the foreground, is left to the imagination; the middle distance is veiled in a misty cloud; the distance is suggested by a few delicate, almost disappearing touches. It is all a convention; but it is a convention which has this much at least to be said in its favour, it is the offspring of necessity.

But this brings us to another point of much importance in the statement of the case. The nature of the technique conventions is such that the technical difficulties in the way of executing landscapes in materials less easy to manipulate than ordinary pigments are obviously much diminished. The canons of this pictorial art can be observed as faithfully by an artist working with lacquer and gold dust as by one who uses water and Chinese ink. The wood-carver and the metal worker, the embroiderer and the dyer, know that the masses of colour which their materials produce may be made to correspond entirely with the masses of full tone in a picture. Again, that wonderful dexterity of workmanship, which surpasses all we have ever dreamed of in the West, makes the workmen look upon the hammer, the chisel, the needle, or the knife, as no less facile instruments for producing sweeping swelling lines than the brush. And, yet again, whether they work with liquid pigment or stiff enamel, with threads of silk or with metal inlay, all alike possess a complete mastery over the gradation of their tones, even to the vanishing point. And thus the arts of all of these craftsmen are identical both in spirit and in execution with the art of the painter; the result, monochrome pictures in shades of gold or steel, in patina of varied lustres, in dyes or in silk embroidery, which are as effective, and which are endowed with the same charms as the painted picture. Thus it comes about

that the lacquer boxes, the porcelain, the silk or cotton raiment, and all the thousand things which add to the charm of life to the Japanese, are embellished with landscapes executed in precisely the same way, with the same firm lines and evenly-covered surfaces, with the same gradations of tone, the same dark shadows and fleecy clouds, as those which came from the studios of the Kano masters.

This class of work is exceedingly interesting from an artistic point of view, and its novelty from our own standpoint makes it fascinating to the collector. It appeals to those learned in such matters on account of the magnificent dexterity of workmanship which ignores rather than overcomes the difficulties which the most unplastic of materials puts in its way; but it falls outside the intent of these studies, and I have only alluded to it at this length in order to make the scope of them clear.

I now turn to the purely conventional ornament of the Japanese. There is in it, as in the decoration of all countries, a broad division between conventional and naturalistic treatment of its subjects; but it is, I think, more sharply marked here than in any other art. Language in its art department is terribly poor, and writers are driven to invent terms, which, as often as not, till their meaning is grasped, seem to be in direct survival from the first confusion of speech. But the two expressions, "natural conventionalism" and "conventional naturalism," do, I think, convey a definite meaning. By natural conventionalism will be understood the conventional treatment of natural forms. The term serves to mark designs which base their form on nature, and to distinguish them from pure line ornament—"geometrical design" as it is sometimes called: "arabesques," and all which is "line for line's sake," and not convention at all. But in conventional naturalism the form of the flower or leaf, which are its most common subjects, is preserved; the treatment only is conventional. It is "form for form's sake"; and it is in this branch of decorative art that the Japanese so greatly excel.

The Flowers of Two Rival Arts.

Natural conventionalism has already received sufficient illustration in the floral forms used in the diapers. They range from the 4-petalled form, common to all systems, to the pæony and chrysanthemum figured on plate 7. Its limitations will clearly appear from the consideration of the methods on which conventional naturalism depends. The more essential line of demarcation which it is the object of the foregoing remarks to emphasise, is that which divides conventional ornament in both its forms from naturalistic art in its application to ornament. The field is a very wide one, and I am compelled to adhere to the main idea on which this book is based—that it is confined to "studies"—and limit the number of illustrations. Those which I have selected are, however, typical of the excellence of this branch of decorative art as practised in Japan.

The first is a bunch of pæonies on plate 17, very free and informal in its inception, and is a fine example. It is taken from the lid of a black lacquer writing-box. The outline of the petals and their arrangement are true to nature: that is how one would draw a pæony. But the bold outlining is the first step in the process of conventionalising the flower. A comparison between its decorative form given in fig. 16 (pl. 7), with its regularly arranged, and evenly balanced petals, and the flowers in this illustration will shew better than any verbal explanation, the essential difference between the two styles of decoration. In the one the form of the flower is used for the purpose of creating a formal design; in the latter the flower itself is used as an ornament. And the difference between this decoration and pictorial art should as clearly appear. The form and natural structure of the flower are faithfully adhered to, but there any attempt at representing the flower pictorially ceases. Its treatment differs not only in the hard outline, but also in the complete absence of modelling; the bellying curves of the petals are indicated only by the curved lines which stand for the veining in nature. And one further point must be noted. This method of treatment distinguishes decorative work from monochrome pictures, in which both outlining and formal veining are of course absent.

One important point should here be noted. A strict adherence to the natural structure of the flower, that is, to its growth, is as important in decorative art in both its forms as it is in naturalistic painting. All writers have insisted on this as fundamental to good decoration. But it is worth while repeating the exhortation, and pointing to the Japanese adherence to it, for unless it be obeyed religiously a design is worthless, conveying no meaning or suggestion. The best example of conventional naturalism is the treatment of the lotus flowers, with the gold-lined petals, in Buddhist *kakemono*, with which many of my readers must be familiar.

Reverting to the pæonies in plate 17, the leaves are in the normal shade of dull gold, which is used as a flat wash, with brighter veining; one only (the yellow one in the illustration) is in very dull gold with darker veins—probably a withered leaf. The petals of the larger flower are of bright gold tinted with crimson; the smaller flower is a thin lamina of gold foil, veined with dull gold.

Two other examples of this style will be found at the end of the book. Plate 31, also from the lid of a black lacquer box; is the *Nanten* (*Nandina domestica*), which brightens the Japanese garden with its scarlet clusters in January, and takes the place in English homes of our native holly berries. The sprays of leaves are very simply treated in dull gold, surrounding two crests, with the berries in brilliant red lacquer.

The freedom of drawing which the direct reference to nature in this work admits of is illustrated by the two iris designs (plates 31 and 32), with which the book ends. They are continuous, and form the two sides of a black lacquer luncheon-box; another similar picture is on the other two sides. The leaves are in dull gold veined with brighter lines; the small spots of white in the drawing are tiny patines of bright gold, which always figure largely in gold lacquer work. The ripples of the water are outlined in gold; the buds and the flowers which are black in the illustration are in brighter gold, and those which are left white are treated like the pæony in plate 17, with thin gold foil.

Two designs are given on plate 18, a pæony and a phœnix with a bough of *Pawlownia*, the principal feature of which is the conventional foliated scroll, developed from a trailing plant, with primitive leaf-forms. There is in almost every advanced system of decoration a scroll peculiar to it; the most familiar being the acanthus-scroll of Roman architecture. The one used in these two designs is, I think, purely Japanese, derived from the Chinese. It is an elementary form of one frequently seen on the chased brass-work in the temples, to which I propose to devote a little space presently. In the coloured drawing, plate 19, this scroll becomes more formal, and shews a remarkable analogy in form, in its systematic meandering, and its colour treatment in three shades of body colour, to that used by the early English missal painters, examples of which are given in the "Grammar of Ornament" (plates 71 to 73), and of which Owen Jones himself made such effective use in his own work—as in the title-page of the "Grammar." This charming panel comes from the pediment to the porch of the shrine to the Abbot Jigen Daishi at Nikko, which is in an unfrequented spot on the hills behind the temple of Iyemitsu.

The design at the top of plate 20 is a narrow open-work panel of chrysanthemums and butterflies, in which a very light and graceful effect is

produced by very simple means. Three shades of gold are used; dull for the leaves, with a brighter tone for the veins, and highly burnished gold foil for the flowers and wings of the butterflies.

The principal figure of the lower design on the same plate is a design of great beauty and originality, a conventionalised pine tree. It is one of those knotted gnarled trees which grow on the fast-vanishing moats of Tokyo. In spite of the treatment to which it has been subjected, all the features of its rugged growth have been preserved, and have been bent into the circular form of the design. But this brings us to another peculiar feature of Japanese decorative art, the use of the circle as a basis of design, which requires consideration in a special section.

I conclude this section with a few examples of the adaptation of floral forms to architectural purposes (plate 21). Fig. 4 shows the lotus leaf used as a rail support; fig 3 is the common form of bronze capping to a newel of red lacquer. In fig. 5 the pointed ball is replaced by an inverted lotus flower, which makes a cap of neat beauty. In fig, 2 the flower is treated more formally, in gilded brass on a newel of black lacquer; and in fig. 1, the same form is used still further conventionalised.

Pine tree highly conventionalized.
(Design for wall-paper.)

Plate 17

CONVENTIONAL NATURALISM—A

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

Plate 18.

CONVENTIONAL NATURALISM— B

with Conventional Scroll-work.

Fig. 2

CONVENTIONAL NATURALISM—D

Fig. 1.

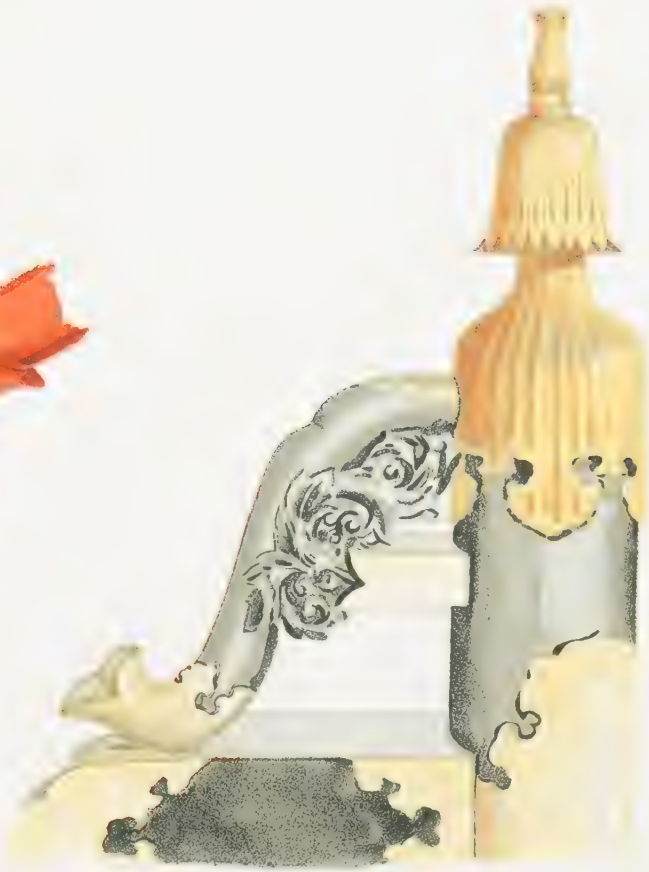


Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.

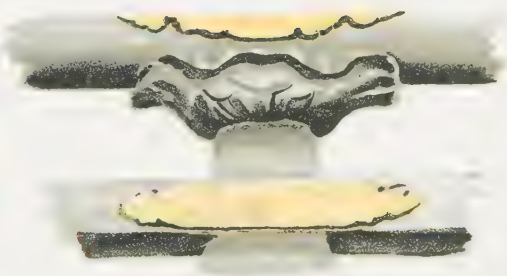


Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

Plate 21.

FLORAL FORMS USED ARCHITECTURALLY.

THE USE OF THE CIRCLE IN DECORATION

The circle for us Westerns is a commonplace figure, possessing little inherent beauty. It has ceased to interest us since we learned its dull properties at school. Even the fact that it has a capacity for holding certain inscribed figures, themselves not without interest, does not excite our artistic imagination. We have never appreciated how adaptable it is to decorative treatment, nor realised that it could serve as a basis for ornament. But in the East the circle holds a charmed position, which I think may be attributed to certain inherent qualities which have passed unnoticed in the West, without having recourse to any theories based on the fact that the Sun's disk is also a circle. Of course the mirror which induced Amaterasu, mother of all curious women, to venture forth from her cave, was round. But although the Sun Goddess, without doubt, presided over the mysterious birth of Japan, and although the mirror is among the sacred treasures, we must I think simply accept the fact that both Sun and mirror are round, without attempting to derive the artistic properties of the circle from it.

One of these qualities is a mysterious power of bending everything, no matter how stubborn its nature, to its own shape, so that even that decoration which gives nearest to nature, in spite of its characteristic play of fancy, submits most gracefully to its yoke. Another power it has, that of inspiration; for it brings out all those fine qualities which are innate to the Japanese artists, invention and composition, developing them to the full. To this belief of mine the pine tree on plate 20 stands as witness.

A bent and stunted pine tree does not suggest much beauty of line or grace of composition to an English decorator; it may have other qualities which appeal to the artist, but certainly not these. Yet among the many things which live as memories of this land of beautiful things, the gnarled pine trees of Tokyo hold a very foremost place. There is something in the way they droop over the moats, which, for the Japanese, is a silent poem; and it has so acted on their imagination as to inspire some of their most beautiful decoration. Even the clumsy clusters of needles have suggested as we have seen, a delightful

formal diaper ; but here the whole tree, with all its ruggedness, has been bent into the charmed circle. And the bough of plum blossom, which the Japanese hold in peculiar tenderness as one of their "Friends in Winter," knotted and ungainly as the pine, has yielded to the same potent influence. On the lid of a gold lacquer box, which is the top figure on plate 22, it forms a design, which for grace of line, and for every other highest quality of perfect decoration, stands as I venture to think, unrivalled.

But before I deal with these and the other circular designs on the coloured plates, 23 and 24, I must devote a litttle space to the circle itself, and its use first in symbolism, and then in art.

The quality of the circle with which we are most familiar is that it gives us, by help of its radius, the inscribed hexagon. This is not ignored in the East, as some of the diapers shew ; but its capacity for subdivision in a somewhat subtle fashion, is the feature which has been specially emphasised.

In this figure, known to the Chinese as "the *yang* and the *yin*," a continuous line composed of the upper and lower halves of circles drawn on two opposite radii for diameters, divides the circle into two equal parts, which from their interlocking have caused the whole figure to be taken as the symbol of completeness, and hence perfection. Every correlation of ideas which makes a perfect whole finds expression in this symbol : the male and female elements, light and dark, positive and negative, and generally all things which are the complement of each other, and are equal to one another.

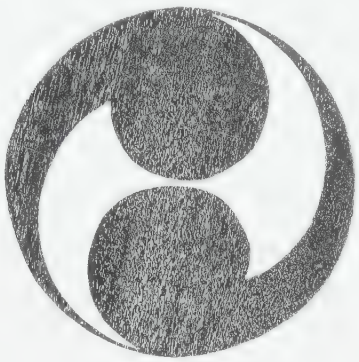
An interesting point of contact between the East and the West must here be noticed. The accompanying figure, a well-known feature in Gothic architecture, is based on the same continuous curves, which the customary points and spaces of the Gothic style do not conceal. The subsidiary figure made by each half is often used independently in the tracery of stained glass windows.

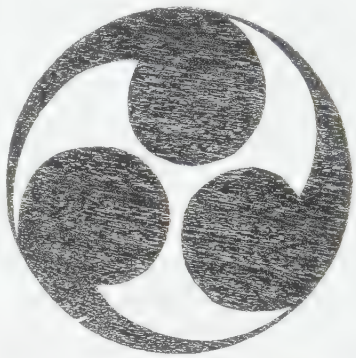
Such coincidences are inevitable, and no conclusions of influence or borrowing can be drawn from them; for the primitive elements of line on which decoration is based are so few, that it would be astonishing if the same forms were not evolved independently in different coun-

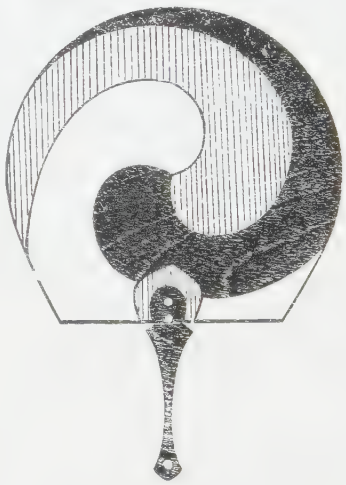
tries. In this case a child playing with a pair of compasses, as those of us who have done it know, would inevitably hit upon this Chinese figure. Although its construction makes the dividing tone a mechanical curve, yet the method is so simple and natural that it may well take rank as a natural curve, and the figure it produces as a natural figure. Such figures have always made a strong appeal to the eastern mind, and were used by them as symbolic of natural things evolved in the same simple and natural manner. The peculiar fascination of the figure in question is, I think, sufficient to account for its symbolic attributes. We are, however, more concerned with the artistic use to which it was subsequently put; and in the designs to be presently studied there is a subtle magic of subdivision of light and shade, which I cannot help thinking owes much of its charm to the influence of this symbol; for completeness, the perfection which it typifies, is the aim of every Japanese artist, and of the decorators in particular.

There are other circular forms which must be noticed here, for they are often confused with the *yang* and the *yin*. They are based on a peculiar form, not often seen independently in art, shaped like a thick comma, formed on a segment of a circle, called the *Tomoe*, as to the origin of which there are many theories. The most unlikely of them is that it has been taken from the form of a boxing-glove, which it somewhat resembles. Captain Brinkley, in his Dictionary of the Japanese language, gives what is probably the most orthodox version of its history, as it is based on the derivatives of the word—*tomo*, a leather shield worn round the wrist by archers, and *e*, a picture, or figure. Hence *tomoe* came to be the name given to this comma-figure, because it was formerly drawn on the archers' leather shield. The Chinese character devised for it, 巴, was evidently based on the shape of the figure. This, however, does not give us any clue to its origin; and I am disposed to think that it was suggested by the form of the eddies of water when it is violently swirled; the archers taking it as their device arbitrarily, as other devices are taken for *mon* or emblems. There is no other natural form which at all resembles it, (the comma itself can hardly be called a natural form: at least it is unknown in the East); and the suggested derivation has this much in favour of it, that it is in accordance with eastern tradition, which is almost an article of artistic faith to the Japanese, to look to nature as the parent of all artistic form.

This comma-form gives rise to two well-known devices composed of two and three "commas" respectively, arranged in a circle; and called the *futatsu tomoe* (the double comma), and the *mitsu tomoe* (the triple comma).







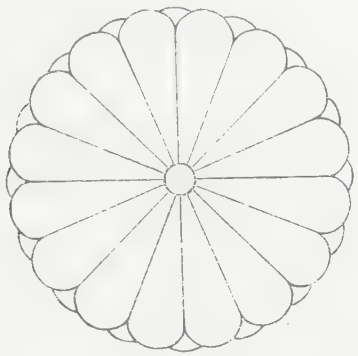
The *futatsu tomoe* is in no sense a "complete" design, by reason of the gap between the two commas; and this distinguishes it from the *yang* and the *yin*. Yet, as I have said above, it is often confused with it; notably, in connexion with the national emblem of Corea, which is the symbol of completeness, four of the "8-trigrams" being introduced into the corners of the flag. I have seen the mistake made even in Corea itself, but in places where in all probability the draughtsman, was a foreigner.

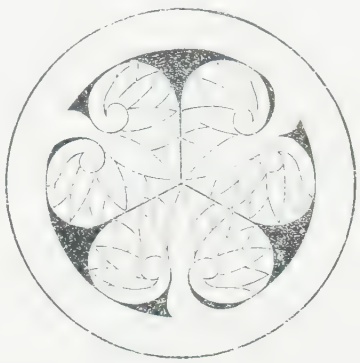
How the "*yang* and the *yin*" came to be the emblem of the Hermit Kingdom I have been unable to ascertain. It will not be uninteresting to note another kindred figure, the triple arrangement of curves used on Corean fans, painted green, red, and yellow. This has clearly no affinity with the *tomoe*, but it is conceivable that it might have been developed from the *yang* and the *yin*."

I have also a note of the emblem carved in wood, thus; but it is probably a degenerate form.

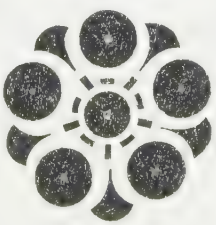
So the circle being established in emblematic use in the country, and the thing symbolised—perfection—being the attribute of the Sovereign Ruler of Japan, it followed in the natural order of things that the Imperial emblem should be based upon this perfect and complete symbol; and the national flower, the

chrysanthemum, lent itself readily to the treatment. And for the Shoguns of the Tokugawa dynasty, the leaves of the marsh-mallow did not need much artistic persuasion to fall into a circular design.





And presently all the nobles followed suit, and the circle became the accepted basis of the *mon* or family emblem. The number of them in these days is legion, but among the multitude I select the following characteristic designs.



The exceptions to this circular law of perfect heraldry are few; it is however curious to note that the *Paulownia*, the second of the Imperial emblems, has never been subjected to it.

Putting all questions of "grant" on the side, in selecting the device for the *mon*, the family would naturally have been influenced by its favourite flower or plant; and in this connexion I note two, in which three leaves of the beautiful *Salisburia adiantifolia* have been woven into an artistic device.

In designing the *mon*, an artistic arrangement of the subject was not likely to be forgotten. And so, in the most natural manner possible, came the next step, the adoption of the circle as a basis for a special class of ornament; which had this special virtue, that while it preserved the rigid outline of the symbol, yet drew from it an inspiration from its internal curves, a suggestion for the development of its own internal decoration, which gave full scope for the play of artistic fancy; and fancy literally ran riot with it.

One other development must be noticed before we turn to the designs. In due course the decorated circles themselves became items of ornament, and were used in combination for the decoration of surfaces, which are often, to adopt a term of heraldry, *semée* of circles: *semée*, of course, with that peculiar and subtle grace of arrangement, that "most admired disorder," which is the key-note of one of the modes of Japanese art. Then, when once these decorated circles were used in this way, they came naturally to be treated in the same manner as other items of ornament—clouds, waves, leaves, flowers, petals; and were massed or broken up, on what, for want of a better name, may be called the "broken-cloud" principle. I think this term will convey its meaning to all who are in the least familiar with Japanese decoration. The use of these circles in combination, large with small, and in groups of two or three, will not escape attention.

I come at last to these two plates, 23 and 24, which give a series of designs, in which the circular arrangement of conventionalised flower-forms touches its highest development. They are taken from a very beautiful black lacquer

luncheon-box, the property of Captain Brinkley, R.A., of Tokyo. It is a pile of five square trays, with an ultimate lid; the whole being about 8 inches square, and 15 inches high. The box is a very conservatory of flowers, for it is simply covered with these floral circles of various sizes. There are the pæony and the plum, and a wealth of blossom besides—iris, lily, apple, dianthus, lychnis, hydrangea, Cape-gooseberry. Some plants lend themselves more readily than others to this treatment: like the iris, wherein nature's law of growth asserts itself at once to the eye. But with that consummate art of design, of bending lines to their will, which characterises the Japanese, no plant so stiff or crabbed in its habit, not even the floral monstrosity the "cock's-comb," but is made to conform to this all-compelling law; and that, for its obedience, is endowed with a charm which is not its own. The colours in the original are as bright as nature's brightest; but the strict canons of conventionalism, on which I have so much insisted, are never once departed from. On the stalks and calyxes are sprinkled those tiny flecks of bright gold leaf, already referred to as being so prominent a feature of the best lacquer work; but they are so numerous and so minute, that I have found it impossible to reproduce them.

The great lesson which this series, and every design of the series, teaches, is much needed by western artists. It is not merely the graceful flow of line which charms and holds us, but even more the subtle distribution of the masses of colour and space, and consequent repose to the eye; and this in spite of an inequality which is very perceptible, and a certain touch of the hap-hazard. This, the greatest virtue which designing can possess, is I believe, purely Japanese; for I can find but little trace of it even in the work of the Chinese.

The position which blank space holds in the art of the Japanese is responsible for one of its most subtle and attractive qualities. In their pictures there are great spaces without so much as a line or faint wash of colour. They are not "wasted," as we should think, and sometimes say; they take their share in the general effect, as any one may prove to his dissatisfaction, if he cut off the blank space from one of his pictures. So it is in these designs. There is in all of them a mysterious sense of proportion of colour to space, never the same, in which the eye delights as much as it does in the delicate tracery of the design itself.

To unravel the mystery is beyond my power; but I may, in the lightest and most Japanese fashion, suggest what perchance underlies it. If delight in the beautiful means anything, it must be an intellectual delight, the cause so acting on the brain as to set up those vibrations to which we give the name of pleasure. We use two other terms in our talk of art; the commonplace, and the eccentric; they refer to things in which there is no beauty. In the former we find no

pleasure, the latter we reject as irritating. The commonplace sets up no brain-vibrations at all, leaving it quiescent, but slightly annoyed; the eccentric stirs up commotion in the brain, which as often as not creates disgust.

These excluded, we are left with the unknown. For "commonplace" connotes a knowledge of the processes on which such effect as there is depends; and the "eccentric" forces itself on the attention, induces a restless seeking for knowledge as to how the effect is produced: making for brain-weariness, and the final rejection of so troublesome a thing. In these art appears in its most unbeautiful aspects. Between them lies beauty in its thousand forms, and we find ourselves in the presence of art's mystery, unknown and unknowable, like the greater mystery of life of which it is so large a part. And so between that mental blank, quiescence, and mental commotion, lies calm, contented, undisturbed repose.

Yet, although I think that the beauty of Japanese art depends in large measure on the existence of an unknown and unascertainable proportion in its composition between light and shade, between the design and its spaces, the artists do not altogether reject equal proportion, what we call "balance," in some things. There never yet was a proposition in Japanese art that it did not seem itself to refute. In the symbol of completeness, the "*yang* and the *yin*," the two parts are not only complementary, they are also equal. It is impossible to imagine that the figure made by a curve composed of the upper and lower halves of two circles on the same diameter, unequal but tangential to the circumference and to each other, thus dividing the circle into two unequal parts, should symbolise completeness. In the "*pakwa* diapers," which we shall presently study, the space between the emblems holds an equally important position with the emblems themselves, and in one class design and space are equally balanced. This may of course, be referred to the necessities of the design; but for its general acceptance in art work of a high order there is another explanation. The same art principle is at work; the rejection of the commonplace is patent.

The circle divided by its diameter also gives two equal and complementary figures; but again, who could imagine that such a subdivision of it should symbolise "completeness?" It is baldly common-place; it ostentatiously asserts the fact that the two parts are equal. But in the "*yang* and the *yin*," there is that pleasant little borrowing of each half from each, which arouses our curiosity, quite apart from the substitution of a curved line for a straight. And in the case of the *pakwa* diapers, the necessary equal distribution of design and space which pervades them is hidden in the meandering of the lines holding yet hiding the

symbol, the beauty and fascination of them increasing as the secret becomes more and more closely guarded.

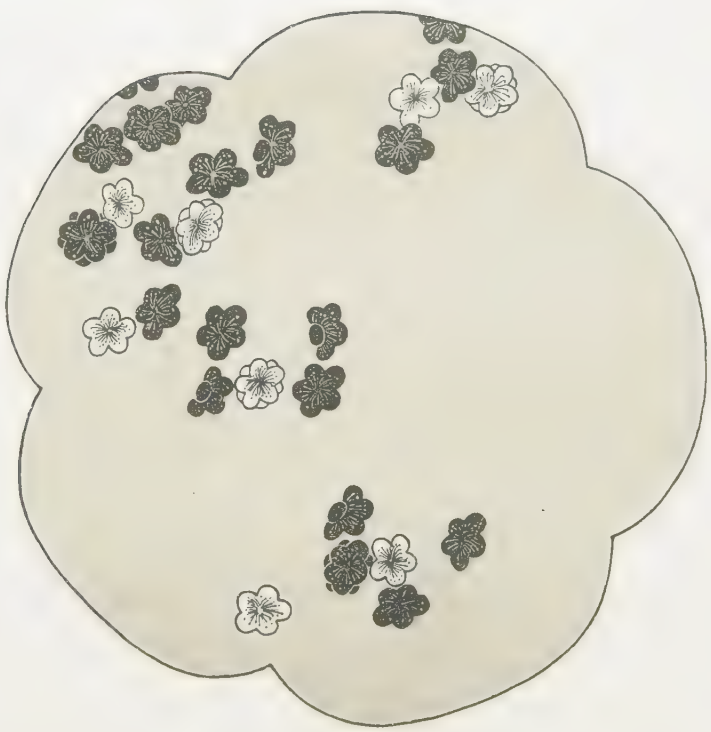
And so I come back once more to these floral designs on my friend's luncheon-box, to the pine tree of the moats of Yeddo, and to the still more beautiful bough of blossoming plum, to note the influence on the designing of the inner curves of the symbol of completeness. They are, I think, directly responsible for the grace of the tangential flow of the inner lines of these designs. There is one among them, borrowed from nature's humblest offspring, the grasses, which tells the story in no unmistakeable fashion. It is one of the most charming and original of the series, with its beautiful flow and play of line, the art of composition so concealed that they seem to be bending to the breezes on the Yumoto plain.

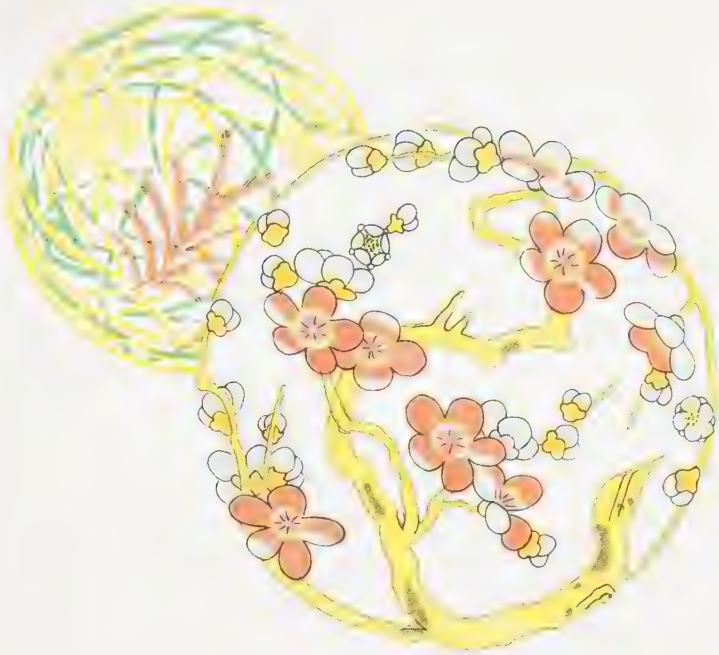
The tangential law of design, on which all writers on the art of decoration have insisted, is easy to account for, because it is nature's law of growth. But the application of it to these circular designs, and the bold sweeps of their inner lines, are traceable, I think, to the influence of the inner curves of the symbol. It need be put no higher than a reminder of the natural law; but in some a more direct influence is unmistakeable.

I have already imagined the circle equally divided by its diameter, and noted the very plain result. Let me now imagine it equally subdivided by any curve passing through the centre, each side of it identical with, but the reverse of the other. Again the circle would be divided into two equal and complementary figures. It would not be commonplace it is true; but all sense of completeness would be gone. There would be no reason apparent for the subdivision; the resulting figure nothing but the expression of an eccentric thought. Perfection could never take such a thing for its symbol. But the figure which the East has taken to symbolise its notion of perfection, in addition to the manner of its subdivision, assimilates the natural law of growth, and by the tangential development of its inner curves, suggests one more charm to the designs based upon it.

This analysis has perchance gone too far, perchance not far enough, leaving many things unexplained—the ugly, the influence which individual and educated taste must exert upon the discriminating mind, the thought which shapes itself in the formula of those who refuse the discipline of art—"I know what I like, and I don't like anything else." For the rest, the unexplained, I must rely on that maxim to which even the precision of the law sometimes appeals when a thing is so plain that many words would only confuse its appreciation—*res ipsa loquitur*, and so leave it.

There remains but one more design to speak of. On the inside of the lid of the gold lacquer box, the second figure on plate 22, there is a little heap of fallen blossoms; they have indeed begun to fall on the lid itself. If their arrangement seems at first sight fanciful, the fancy which prompted it had an extraordinary sense of completeness. Not one blossom more, bright with gleaming metal—the newly fallen ones; or of dull gold—those which have lain longer on the ground, could be laid there. It is a beautiful example of that space-value of which I have talked so much. But again, there is something more; nature once more lies hidden as the explanation of its charm, as the key to the absence of all that we call "method." On a bright spring morning, when the light breeze lifts the flowers from the tree, that is how it lays them, thickest near the parent trunk.





SCROLL WORK AND METAL CHASING

In the two designs on plate 18 a formally conventionalised scroll is introduced as the accompaniment to the pæony and the phœnix. I now give a few examples of the scrollwork used in the temples for the chasing of the metal ornaments and end-caps of the beams and pillars. It is also used on the brass corner-pieces of large lacquer boxes.

Some apologies are due to my readers for the very crude way in which these designs are presented ; they are merely reproductions of pencil rubbings, taken very hastily many years ago. It is only on the advice of a friend of great experience as an architect, and learned in his art, that they appear in this form. As designs they hold an important place in the decorative art of Japan, and the only other method of including them in this book would have been to have had them redrawn. But the actual lines of the chaser would have been lost, and this in itself seemed so important a point, that I have followed my friend's advice

I start with a very simple design on plate 25. It is the original from which the scrolls on plate 18 spring. That form of it, I think I am correct in saying, is the one commonly used for gold ornament on lacquer, while the one given on plate 25 is more adapted for metal chasing.

This design seems without doubt to be the Japanese variety of the foliated scroll in Chinese style, which was often copied in Japan, on plate 26. The scalloping of the stem is abandoned, the Japanese designers preferring more flowing lines, that of the foliation reduced, and the volute at the base of the leaves omitted.

With regard to the Chinese scroll, it seems clear that the scalloped leaf-form was repeated from the form adopted for the inturned edges of the petals in the very conventionalised form of pæony of which we have already seen an example in fig. 12 (pl. 6), and which is traditional to Chinese art. Here therefore, we have the genesis of the Japanese scroll.

It appears in a more elaborate form on plate 27, on which are given two brass end-plates of temple beams. The sweep of the stem of the scroll conforms

to the best traditions of the classical scroll-work of the West, and is obedient to the law of tangential growth, without which scroll-work is mere nothingness. This law is equally applicable to the foliation; for the scroll must have originated from a trailing or climbing plant; though curiously enough, the acanthus scroll is an artificial creation, for that plant is not a creeper. The distinguishing feature of the scroll at its best, is a complete mastery of free-curve drawing, and it was only natural that the Japanese artists should have produced beautiful specimens of this class of work. They also shewed a remarkable facility for adapting the scroll to the exigencies of the plate to be ornamented. This is particularly noticeable both in the principal curve of the large design on plate 27, and also in the foliage which springs from the terminal volutes of the smaller plate.

It must not be imagined that I attribute this facility solely to the Japanese decorators; it is the attribute of all masters of the decorative art who have designed scroll-work. There is a wood-cut in Owen Jones' "Grammar," in the chapter on Mediæval Ornament (p. 102), of an Early English scroll, which adapts itself to the spandrel in which it is placed in a similar manner to that on plate 27.

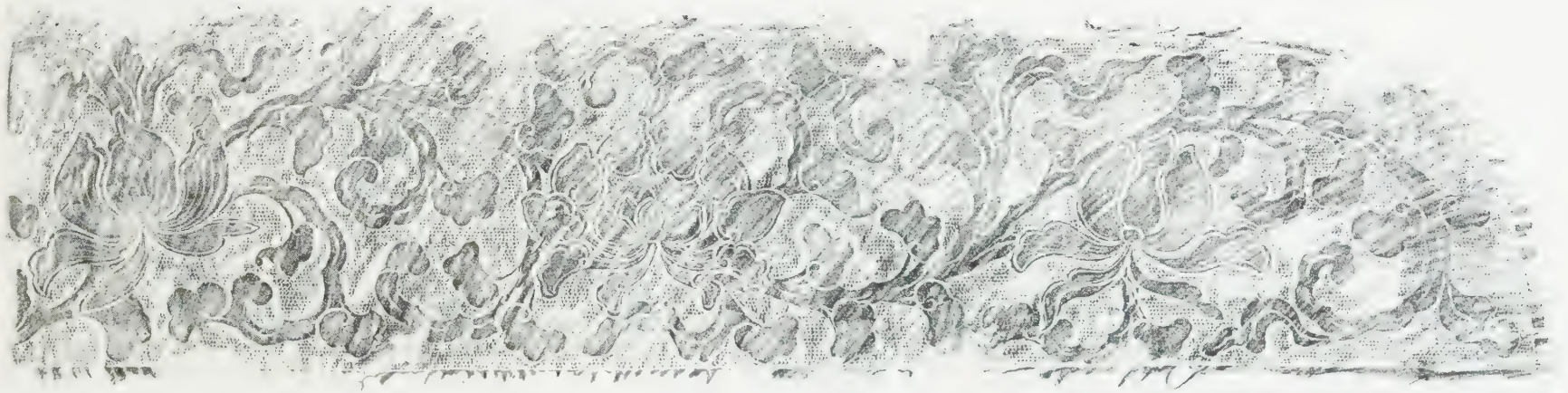
In plate 28, the foliation of the scroll is still further elaborated, and much larger. Subject to the absence of modelling, otherwise than by line indications, this scroll has a remarkable affinity to the acanthus scroll of Roman architecture, both in the method of conventionalising the foliage, and also in the way in which it almost conceals the stem. In this example there is the same adaptation of the curves of the scroll to the form of the metal plate as in plate 27, and the same or even greater vigour in the flow of the lines of the foliation. I do not think it is possible here to make any suggestion of borrowing or even of due influence; it is one more point at which the East has touched the West in its decoration.

In plate 29 the metal is in the form frequently adopted for the protecting cases at the end of beams. A pæony in the conventionally natural form with which we are familiar, surrounded by small leaves, is chased on a background of one of the *pakwa* diapers.

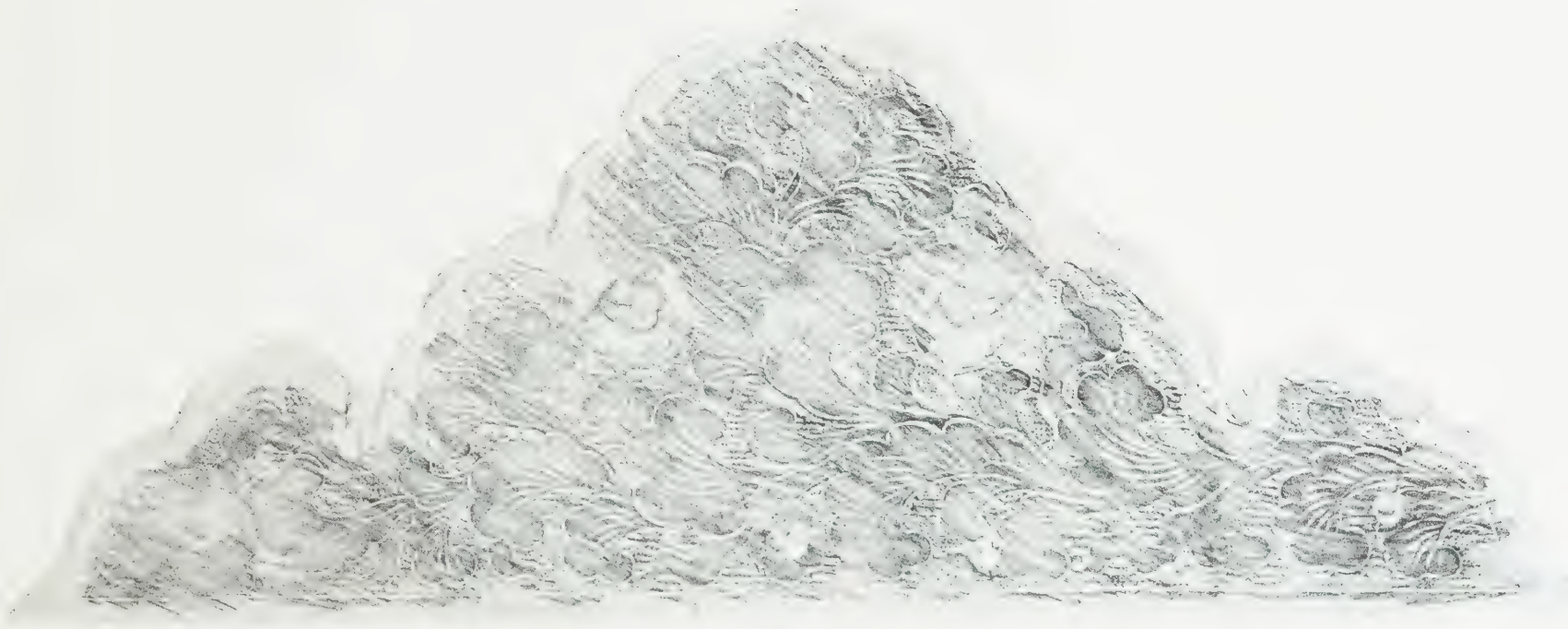
I have hesitated to multiply examples of this beautiful form of decoration; but I cannot refrain from giving one more, an example of the departure of the temple artists from the severe ornament which they brought to so high a pitch. It is a simple little idyll; the marsh-mallow of the Tokugawas, growing in, and swaying to the running river.

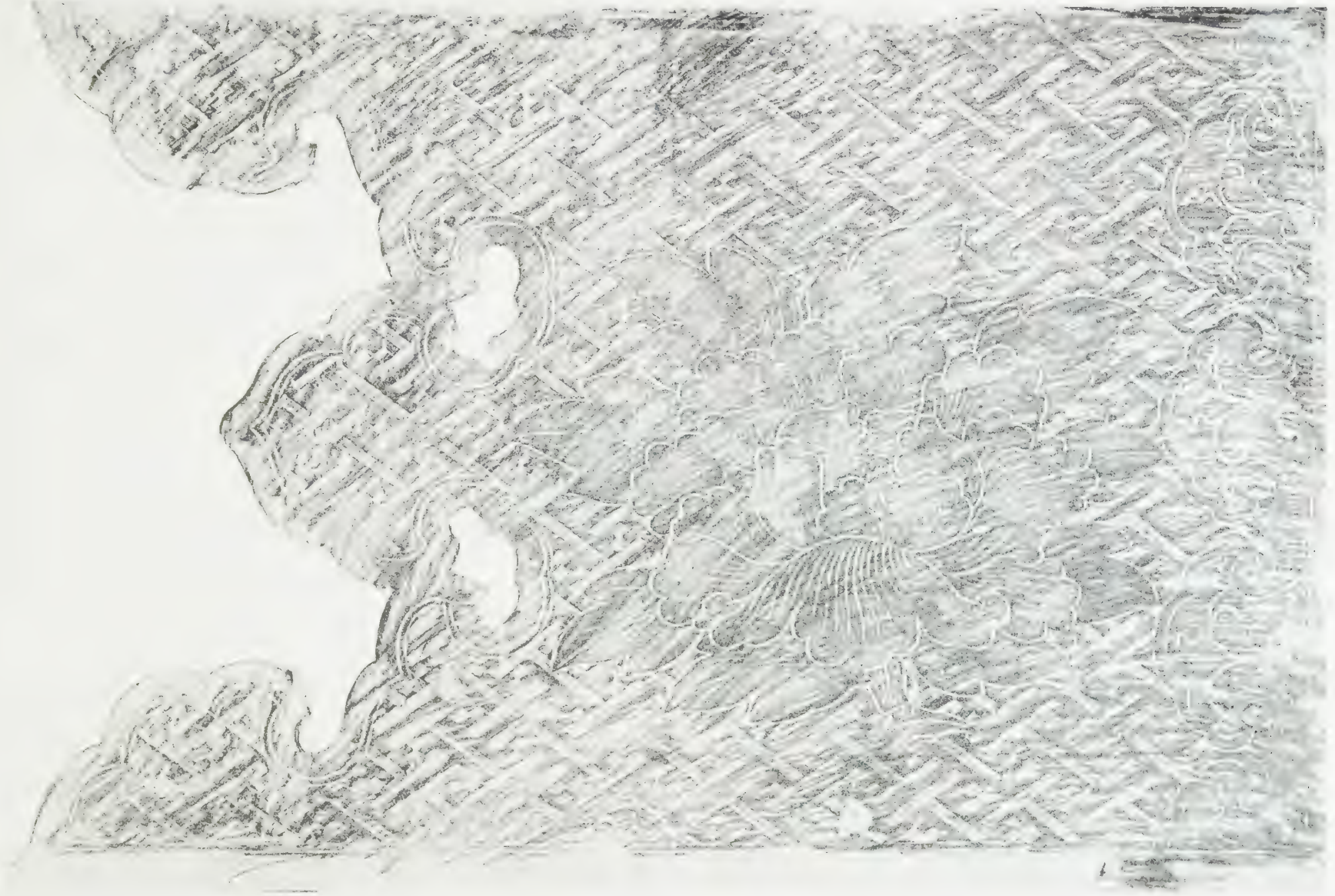
Pate 25

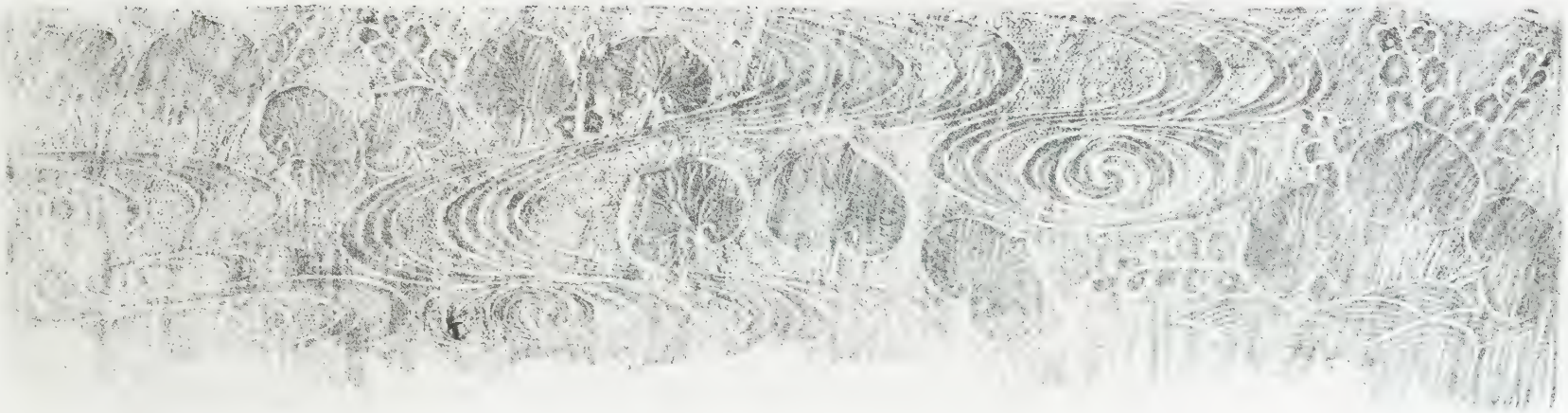
SCROLL WORK—A.



SCROLL WORK—B.







THE PAKWA DIAPERS

AND

KEY-BORDERS OF THE EAST.

In the foregoing notes I have repeated the familiar statement that the priest in the East, as elsewhere, by introducing religious symbols into the decoration of the temples, made use of art to remind the casual and the curious of the eternal verities to which those symbols gave formal expression. The method he adopted was to introduce them into the diapers with which he lavishly ornamented the walls, the ceilings, and the doorways; and he exerted all his ingenuity to attract the eye by using every device for beautifying them, arraying them in brilliant garb of glistening light or splendid colour.

I propose now to study the gradual evolution of the symbolic diapers and borders. In doing so I am led inevitably to trespass into the regions of a debate of far greater importance than the mere invention of a prettily complicated design. The diapers are known to a few as forming the *cloisons* to eastern enamels, and they have given them the name of "*cloisonné* patterns." The borders are known as the "Key"-patterns, or frets, and are generally assumed to have originated in Greece. By those who know of their existence in the East, they are further assumed to have travelled thence through India to China, and so to Japan; a conclusion, as I think, somewhat hastily drawn, and without due consideration of the premises.

The original notes from which this more exhaustive study is compiled formed the subject of a paper read before the Japan Society in London, in 1893. During the discussion which followed Professor Anderson, the Chairman, made the following remarks;—As to the origin of the "Key"-pattern, he should say that it was neither Japanese nor Chinese, but Greek. We found precisely the same "key" in China as in Japan, and we knew that many branches of art did extend from Greece to Japan, together with the Buddhist religion; and that the Græco-Buddhistic arts left in certain parts of India at the time of the conquest of Alexander, were transferred to China, from China to Corea, and from Corea to Japan. He should imagine the Greek "Key"-pattern followed the same course.

If our old friend, than whom no one was better versed in all learning appertaining to Japan, had no further information to guide us, I think I am justified in saying that the only fact we know of is that this design is of greatest antiquity in the East as it is in Greece.

The question whether a design, found in two widely-sundered parts of the world, developed spontaneously in both, or was borrowed by one country from the other, and which was the borrower, is in itself interesting. But once it is admitted that a religious symbol enters into the structure and development of the

design, mere artistic interest gives way to questions of grave importance in the history of the world, in which religion has played a part second only to war.

These art studies therefore trench inevitably on the larger question of the early relations of the East with Greece, and the place which Græco-Buddhism" takes in the religions of the world. My contribution to that subject must be limited to the statement of certain facts which the design itself in its various forms furnishes. They seem to me to be the premises of which we stand in need; and if I am right in the statement of those premises, I doubt if any other conclusions than those I have indicated can be drawn from them.

The designs, both diapers and borders, which form the groundwork of the following discussion, were found in actual use in Nikko and Shiba. They were collected at different times, and without regard to the building up of any theory upon them. But the first important fact that they reveal is that in its most primitive form these diapers were based upon an element of the *pakwa* symbol; and secondly, that without much ingenuity, there is discoverable among them a perfect and orderly scheme of development from the primitive form. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the importance of this fact in a question depending almost exclusively upon research; and it is not the only case in which a natural order can be clearly traced in the art of the temples.

But there is another and still more important fact which I think must be accepted; that the "Key"-borders were not designs which developed independently of the diapers, but sprang from them.

A priori, it would, I think, defy human ingenuity to contrive designs of such intricacy except from some definite origin, and on some carefully thought out plan. And it is significant that there is among the borders a regular order of development which runs parallel with that of the diapers: that the same *pakwa* element, both in its simple and complicated forms, is as manifestly the basis of all the borders as it is of all the diapers. To this a further fact must be added: that the use of this element in the border is fragmentary, only half of it being taken. Again *a priori*, it seems to me impossible to conceive that a series of such complicated designs as the borders, should have been evolved by the use of half the element independently of another series of equally complicated designs which were being evolved contemporaneously by the use of the whole element. Apart from the fact that the evolution of the diapers was the simpler process of the two, the constructive principle, with its elaborate system of interlocking of the different parts of the element, is not likely to have been hit upon for borders independently of the diapers; for the designer of borders must, as will presently be seen, inevitably have dropped into the diaper during the process of designing, by the

mere accidental prolongation of his lines. And lastly, every true "Key"-border can in fact, by prolongation of its lines, be developed into a diaper. These statements I hope to justify in the following elaborate study of both forms of design.

Now, supposing them to be justified, what light do they throw on the question whether the "Key"-border developed independently in China and Greece? or whether it travelled with the Sun or from the West eastwards? For myself I believe this question would be conclusively answered by the answer to another—Did the Greeks ever use diapers? There is little or no trace of them in Owen Jones' "Grammar of Ornament." But for some people this would not be conclusive; and I am therefore disposed to say that the answer depends absolutely on another, and as I believe, crucial question, Was the *pakwa* at any time a recognised religious symbol in Greece? If it was not, then the conclusion seems to be irresistible, that the diapers and their offspring, the borders, originated in the East; and that the borders, though probably not the diapers, travelled westward into Greece.

One further, but subsidiary point, is, I think, conclusively shewn, if the symbol was not used in Greece—that the whole of the complicated system of borders travelled together, and not isolated fragments of it, from which the system was reconstructed in Greece. For the process of evolution depends on an accurate and familiar use of the *pakwa* symbol; and if that was not known in Greece, it could not have been introduced promiscuously into the different forms of the diaper by unlearned artists.

The probable development of the *swastika*, and the designs based upon it, from the *pakwa* designs, will be noted during the progress of the discussion.

One word of warning I must here give to the reader. This discussion is inevitably highly technical, and possibly tedious. It is intended primarily for those who wish to study, and perhaps themselves to construct and use these designs. I trust, however, that it may be found sufficiently lucid for the ordinary reader to follow the thread of argument which runs through the discussion, even if he have to accept on trust some of the details of construction on which the designs are based, and on which the gradual evolution, of the more complicated ones, both diapers and borders, depends.

The *pakwa* is an arrangement of long and two short lines—"divining-rods," as they were called by the initiated—in groups of three, as shewn in fig. I.

Fig. 1

Eight variations in grouping are possible, hence the name the "Eight Trigrams," by which the complete series is known. Much learning has been bestowed upon its teaching, but for our purpose it is sufficient to note that each group is supposed to represent some power in nature, active or passive—earth, air, fire, water, thunder, and the rest.

The lines are found in another form, with the ends of each returned, as shewn in Fig. 2.

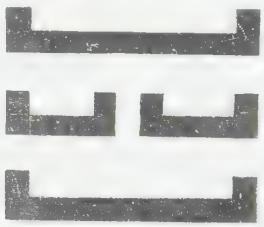


Fig. 2

The symbol does not appear in decoration in its group form, one of the elements of the groups with the returned ends being the basis of the diapers.

The other well-known symbol which enters into these designs is the *svastika*, or *fylfot* (fig. 3). In Japanese heraldry it usually takes the form given in fig. 3*a*. It might be described as two elements of the *pakwa* groups with the ends returned in opposite directions, placed across one another at right angles. I hesitate however to adopt this description, as it would appear to suggest that it was in fact its origin, whereas its natural evolution from the *pakwa* diapers will hereafter become apparent. It probably has an intimate relation with the "Wheel of Life"; for, as the eye travels round from one limb to the other, the mind becomes impressed with a sense of rotatory motion.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 3*a*.

Now, if we take a pair of the *pakwa* elements with the returned ends, and set them back to back, as in Fig. 4, and then place two more back-to-back pairs underneath them, so that the returned ends of the top limbs of these second pairs lock with those of the bottom limbs of the first pair, and repeat this regularly over the whole surface, as in Fig. 5, we get an elementary design very much used in the East, which is the *pakwa* diaper in its simplest form.

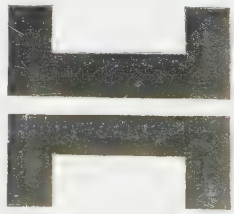


Fig. 4.

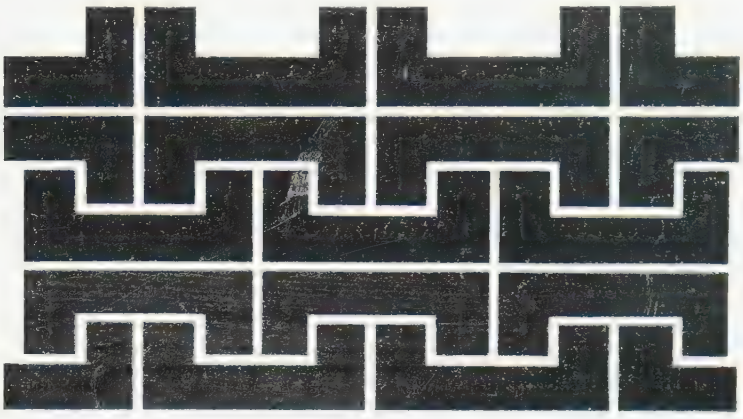


Fig. 5.

In order to obtain a symmetrically locked design, the length of the returned ends must be the same as the thickness of the limb itself, thus making a small square. In the following descriptions of the illustrations this square will be taken as the unit of measurement. The length of the limb in this instance is 5 units, and the breadth of the intervening space between all the members of the design one third of a unit.

The next development consisted of arranging the pairs of limbs "half-back-to-back," as in Fig. 6; then, when other half-back-to-back pairs of elements are locked with the first pair, as in the previous case, over the whole surface, we get the design, Fig. 7; also a familiar one, which is the second of the *pakwa* diapers.

Fig. 6.

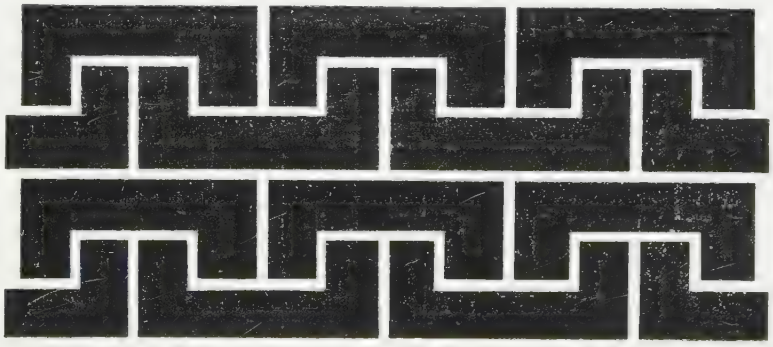


Fig. 7.

These two diapers contain the two main constructive principles on which the whole series is based. We shall presently find the *pakwa* element extended and much elaborated, resulting in most complicated diapers; but however complicated it may be, the principle on which the design is constructed will be found to be invariably, a pair of the elements set either full back-to-back, or half-back-to-back. All these diapers, therefore, fall into two classes, each being based on one of these principles, and each class will be found to have characteristics peculiar to itself, resulting from its constructive principle.

Fig. 8.

I have come across one diaper, given in the Diaper plates (fig. 8 plate 5), in which the simple *pakwa* element is arranged in pairs set at right angles to one another, as in Fig. 8, giving the diaper, Fig. 9.

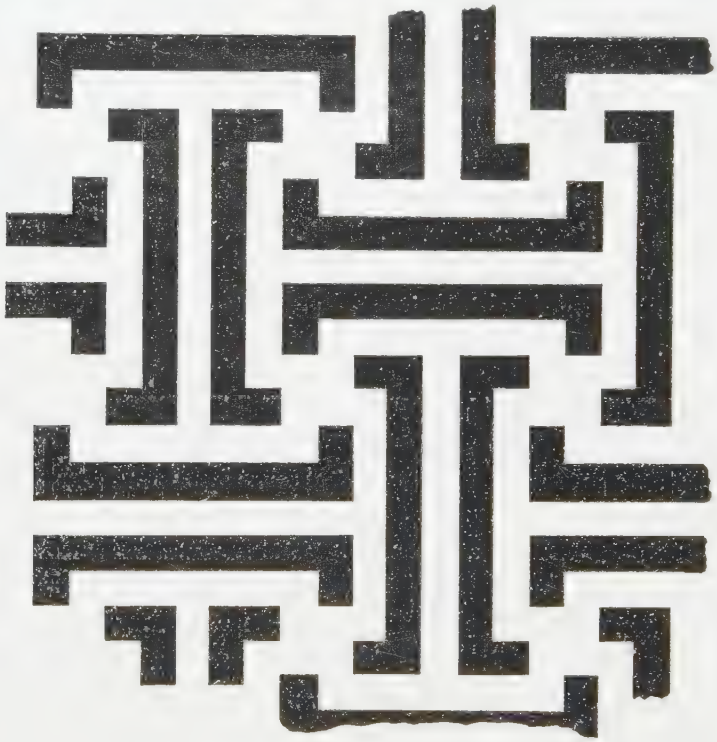


Fig. 9.

Two points about the pair of elements in fig. 8 must be noticed. The limb has been lengthened to allow of the interlocking of the returned ends of the pairs: in this case to 9 units. And the intervening space between the elements has become an important feature of the design. It is now increased to a full unit; and henceforth it always retains this dimension, instead of being one third of a unit as in the first two diapers.

This diaper (fig. 9) holds an important position in the development of the series. It will be remembered that in one class of lattices the spaces between the lattice-work themselves formed a substantive design, the woodwork appearing to vanish, the eye resting only on the series of pleasantly shaped spaces. Now, in this diaper, the spaces between the limbs give the figure, fig. 10; or taking the half of it, fig. 10*a*.

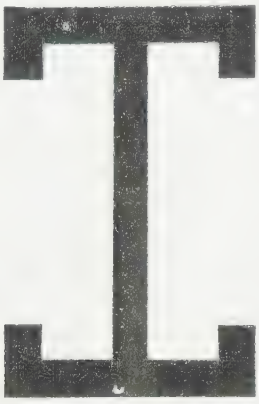


Fig. 10.

Fig. 10*a*.

This figure, 10*a*, is the *pakwa* element with a central stem added; and this stem is retained in all the subsequent variations of it, the figure itself becoming the basis on which all the diapers are developed. Two of these figures are set back-to-back, as in the elementary diapers, and this becomes the unit of design in the future. The reason for taking the half instead of the whole figure (fig. 10), will appear as the argument proceeds.

In order to illustrate what I mean by saying that the spaces between the limbs take their share in the general effect of the design, I have made the following transformation (fig. 11) of figure 9, with the spaces black, and leaving the *pakwa* elements white.

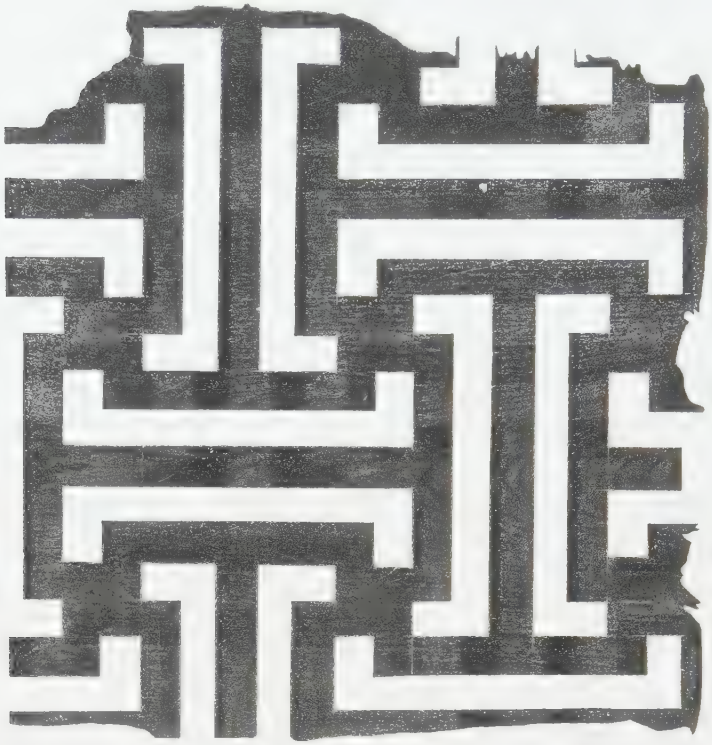


Fig. 11

The effect of this, looked at as a mere question of black and white, or light and shade, it most unsatisfactory; it throws the pairs of *pakwa* elements into high relief, and the predominant black gives no determinate design, but only a confused and meaningless black mass at the meeting points of the ends of the white elements. It has the effect of fret-saw work, and lacks altogether that appreciation of the due proportion between light and shade which is characteristic of Japanese art, and of which I have already talked sufficiently. From this stage onwards, the diapers, unlike the lattices, are composed of an equal amount of light and dark; but this point forms part of the previous discussion.

We now come to the first of the diapers based on the new form of the element, the limb with the central stem, fig. 10*a*. It is constructed by pairs arranged back-to-back, with an intervening space of one unit, (fig. 12.)

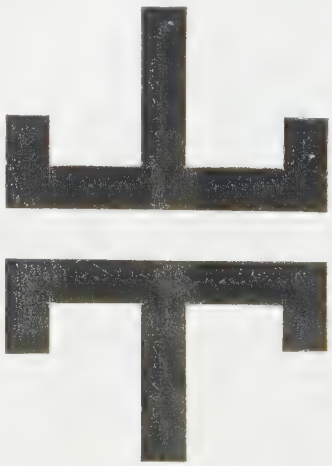


Fig. 12.

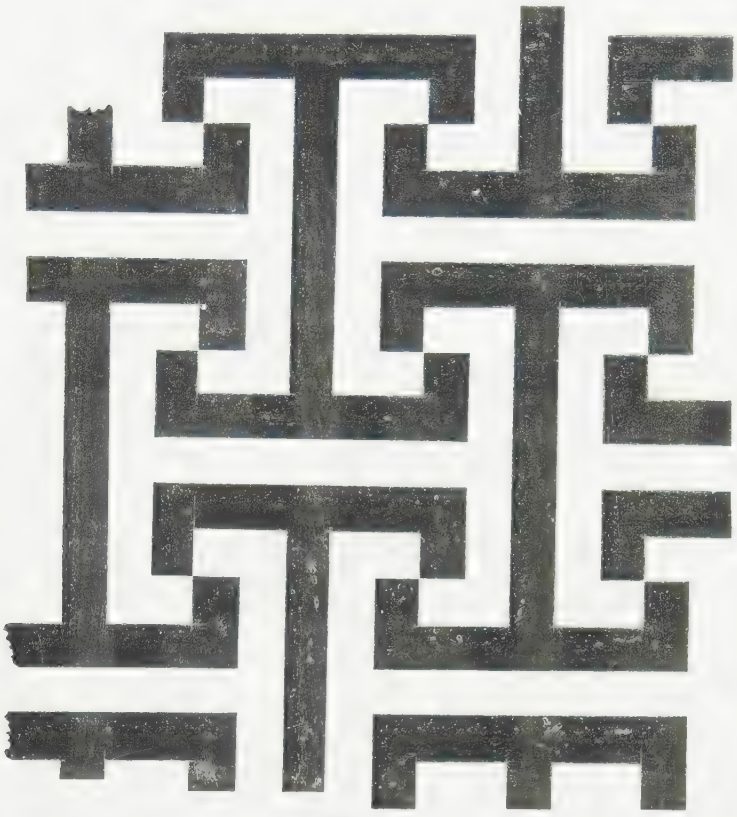


Fig. 13

In this diaper, fig. 13, the space-shape is identical with the shape of the elemental figure. It is probably the original of what we know as the "Chinese puzzle," as will be seen if pieces of differently coloured cardboard are cut to the shape of fig. 10, and fitted together at right angles to one another. The length of the *pakwa* element is 7 units, of the returned ends 1 unit, and of the connecting limb 7 units, to correspond with the base of the complementary *pakwa* element (the space-figure) which fits into it.

This rectangular setting of the pieces of the Chinese puzzle has no further relation with the principle of the diaper, fig. 9; for here the space-figures are set at right angles, and not the pairs of elements. The whole design, spaces and elements, fits together.

In the next development we revert to the interlocking principle on which the earliest diapers were based. The length of the element in fig. 13 does not permit this, and the points of the returned ends only touch. In order, therefore, to allow the elements of each pair which face one another to lock, they are

extended by two units, making 9 units in all, and the returned ends are prolonged to 2 units, as in fig. 14, which produces the diaper, fig. 15.

The characteristics of this diaper are, first, that it differs essentially from the Chinese puzzle principle, the pairs of elements standing out prominently as the main feature of the design, and the space no longer produces an identical shape. Secondly, this space runs in and out of the elements in a continuous fillet. In view of what follows hereafter in connexion with the production of the "Key-border," this point must be specially borne in mind.

In the next development a new idea is introduced into the form of the *pakura* element; the returned end is moved inwards by one unit, as in fig. 16, but the length of the element is as in fig. 13, 7 units. There is no interlocking, the diaper belonging to the "Chinese-puzzle" class.

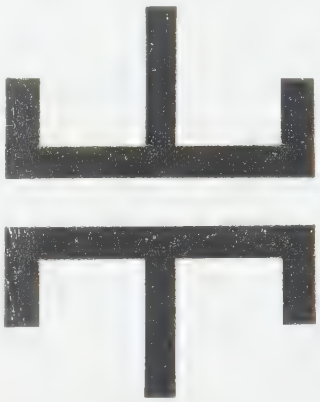


Fig. 14.

The adoption of this new feature in the shape of the element appears at first sight to be arbitrary. The result of it, however, is very important, for it gives a new resultant figure at the point where the returned ends (though, owing to their new position, they are "ends" no longer) meet, and produces a

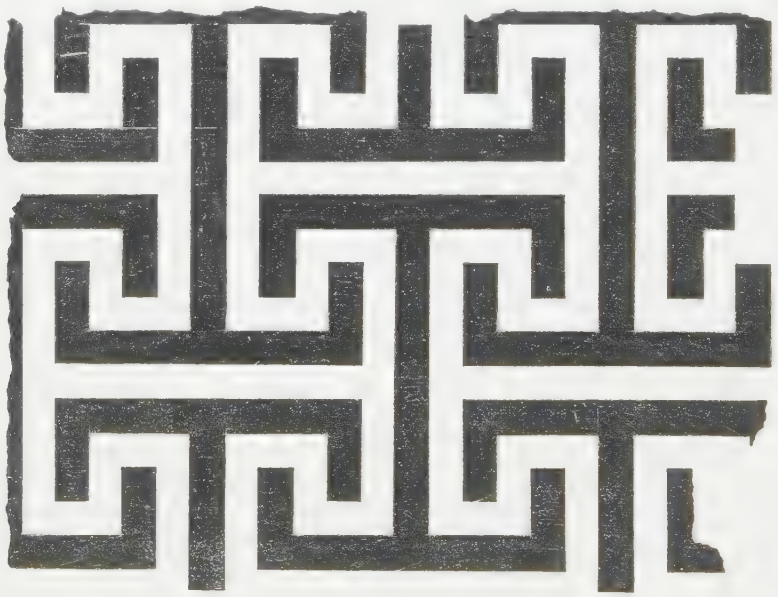


Fig. 15.

more dazzling effect than the simpler arrangements. Further, this resultant figure

becomes a special feature of the diaper, of great importance in the subsequent developments, as it contains the germ of what will presently appear.

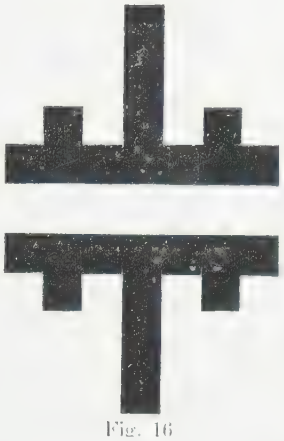


Fig. 16

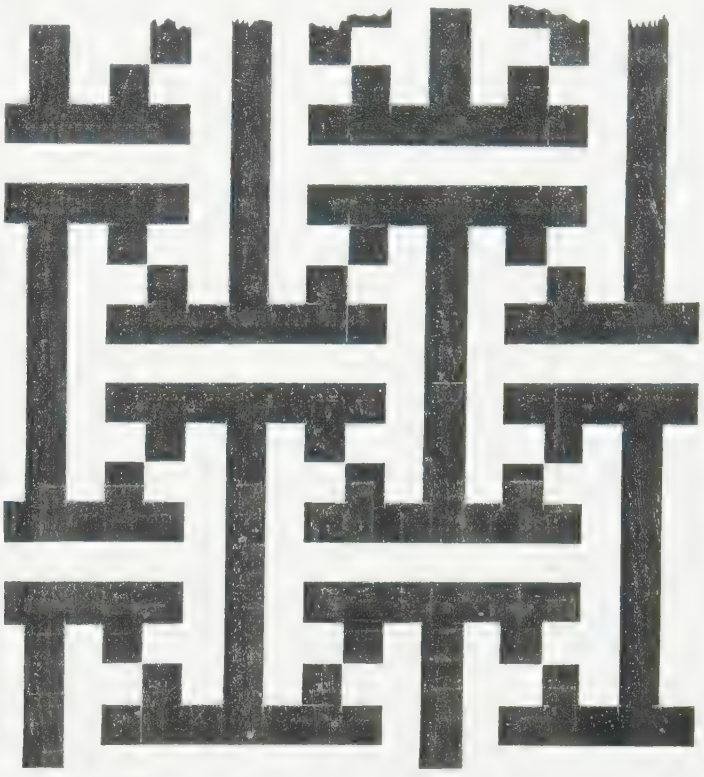


Fig. 17.

I pass now to one of the most complicated of the *pakwa* diapers, which is also one of the Chinese-puzzle class, the space-shape being identical with the elemental design, and there being no interlocking of the elements.

The shape of the element is given in fig. 18; its form appears at first sight to be fantastic, no special reason being at first sight discoverable for the introduction of the "crook." But if we look a little deeper we find that if the opposite crooks of the pairs are joined they make the simple *pakwa* element; so that this new unit of design has been produced by laying two single *pakwa* elements across the back-to-back pair of elements with the central stem, the length of these elements being increased to 11 units, in order to admit of this being done.

I have given one complete section of this diaper in outline, and it will be seen that after this long process of development we have arrived at the *svastika* in outline, which I have thickened for emphasis. There are four of them in the section.

It should have been noted before, that although for convenience of demonstration, I have taken the *pakwa* elements as solid, the diapers are often found in brocades, and sometimes in ordinary decoration, as they are used by the enamellers, in outline.

From this sudden and unexpected appearance of the *svastika* some things may be inferred. First, the gradual evolution of the diaper from its primitive form to this, one of its most complicated forms, shows that it was not constructed from the *svastika*. Secondly, that this diaper could not have been devised for the purpose of introducing this second symbol; for it is clear, not only that its

Fig. 18.

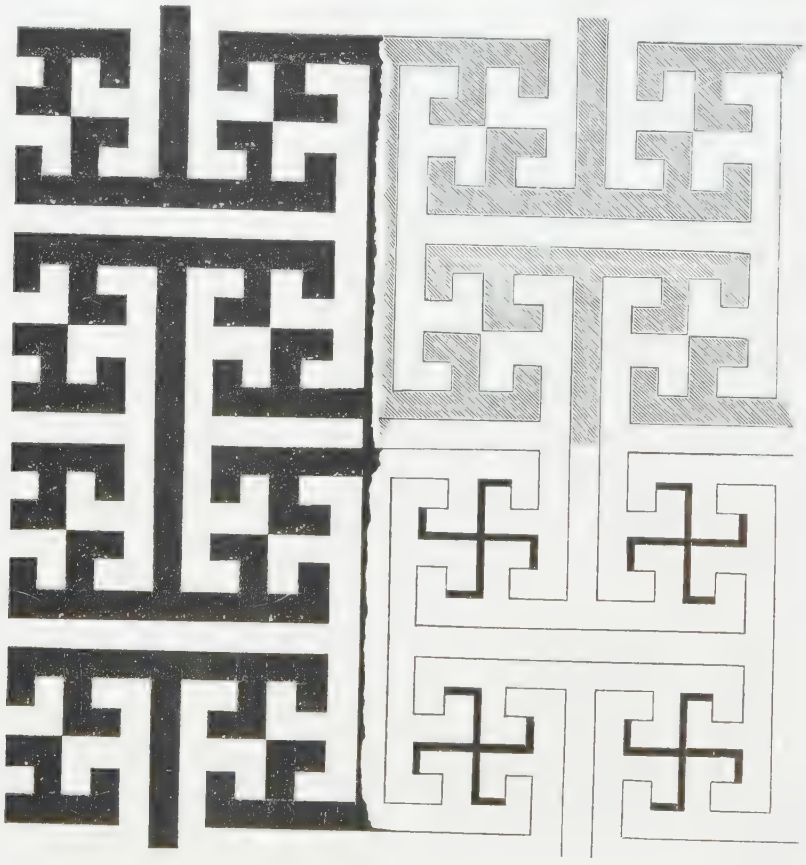


Fig. 19.

appearance is fortuitous, but also that no such ornate and complicated design could have been originated at first hand, and this quite apart from the fact that the evidence is conclusive that it did not. We get therefore to this, that there has been a gradual evolution of designs based on the *pakwa* element, along the lines indicated, and that at this stage the *svastika* appears. Or, putting this more accurately, at this point in the evolution of the diapers, a new and rather fascinating figure appeared, which having attracted the attention of the devout, was taken out of the diaper, and accorded a special symbolic meaning of its own. Possibly the *svastika* has been imagined before its spontaneous appearance in the diaper, that this was, so to speak, its second incarnation ; but the suggestion which I have made that this is in fact its origin has somewhat stubborn facts to support it.

Is there anything in this opinion in conflict with the conclusions come to by the many learned authors who have collected materials on the subject? Really, I do not not think so. The missionary fathers have called it a *croix gammée*, but find in it no relation to the true cross. Indeed the teaching of their predecessors, of the time when the challice of Ignatius Loyala brought comfort to the Christian martyrs of Japan, must have been that the cross was a truer symbol to hold faith by than the *svastika* or wheel of life.

Other authors, like Dr. Robert Ferrers, assert its use in all ages and in all lands : connect it with Indian fire-worship : trace it as a mystic evil-dispelling ornament throughout the whole of Europe in its primitive state. Mr. Elkins says that it was the monogram of Vishnu and Shiva, is to be found on the battle-axe of Thor in Scandinavian inscriptions, as an ornament in the crowns of the Bonpa deities of Thibet, and a favourite symbol with the Peruvians. This learned author also says that it was the symbol of the esoteric teaching called " the pure secret of the eye of right doctrine," communicated orally by Buddha before his death to his disciple Maha Kashiapa ; and that it was usually placed on the heart of Buddha, whence it came to be called " heart's seal," as containing within it the whole mind of that divinity.

But all this leaves the creation of the symbol and the artistic developments based on it untouched, and concerns more its subsequent spreading through the world. It throws its origin into a remote past; but the fact of its appearance, which the evolution of the diapers demonstrates, and which to the devotees of a mystic religion would be looked upon almost as a supernatural creation, merely sets back the origin of the *pakwa* symbol to a still more remote period.

I must now revert to the diapers, and have at once to note yet another spontaneous appearance of the *svastika* in a somewhat curious fashion. The diaper, fig. 20, has already been given on plate 5, fig. 9, in order to shew its artistic effect.

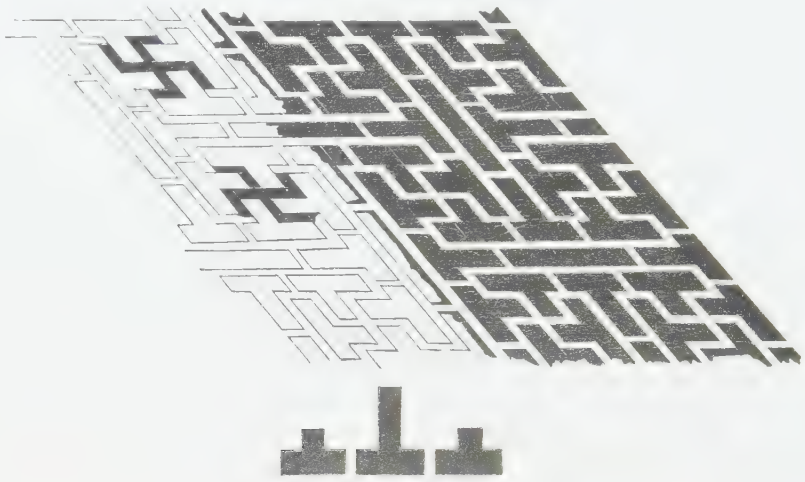


Fig. 20.

Its construction must now be studied. The element of which it is composed, shewn under the diaper, is the same as fig. 16 broken into mosaics; and the diaper itself is the same as the diaper fig. 17, but with its lines set at an angle, and the whole of it, both element and space-shape, is in mosaic. The result is that a fillet of space is left running round each fragment. Now this fillet produces, as shewn in the outlined portion of the figure, the *svastika* at regular intervals, in the same way as it is produced in fig. 19. It is in fact the outline of the figure produced in fig. 17 by the contact of the protuberances of the elements, the special feature of that diaper to which I have already called attention. The importance of the idea which suggested the moving inwards of the returned end of the *pakwa* element as shewn in fig. 16, thus becomes manifest.

I referred in connexion with fig. 19, to a "complete section" of the diaper as having been given in outline. The meaning of that expression must now be explained. Both in fig. 19 and fig. 20, the *svastika* symbols are produced alternately face-to-face, both horizontally and vertically. The complete set of *svastika* figures must therefore be taken to be a square of four, those which are diagonally opposite being alike. This four-fold repetition of the symbol becomes itself a feature in subsequent designs, as will be seen hereafter.

We may now take stock of the different forms of the elements which have come under our notice. They are Nos. 1, 2, 4, and 6 of the series given in fig. 21. But the introduction of the "crook" into the *pakwa* element (fig. 18) suggests, from the complicated nature of the new element resulting from it, the existence of intermediate stages in the development of the *pakwa* element as the unit of design for the diapers. The process has been so gradual, that I think it may be taken for granted that there were at least two intermediate stages with which we are not at present familiar. The following seems to have been the probable sequence, Nos. 3. and 5 being new to us.

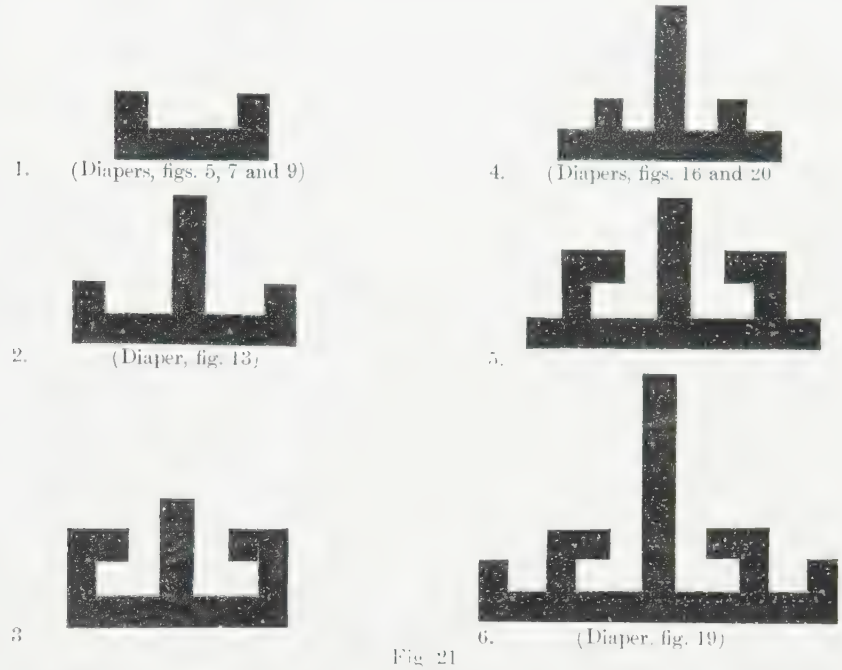


Fig. 21

With regard to No. 3, which is composed of the returned end of the element lengthened and itself returned, it must almost certainly have been considered with a view to use. If it is treated in the same way as the other elements, set back-to-back, and the full figure constituted with the whole of the central limb, it will be seen that it produces only a series of isolated figures, as in fig. 22. I have seen this arrangement used in brocade, and also the corresponding one which would be produced if these figures were set half-back-to-back. There is no continuity of design, and therefore they are not diapers, and hold no place in the present discussion.

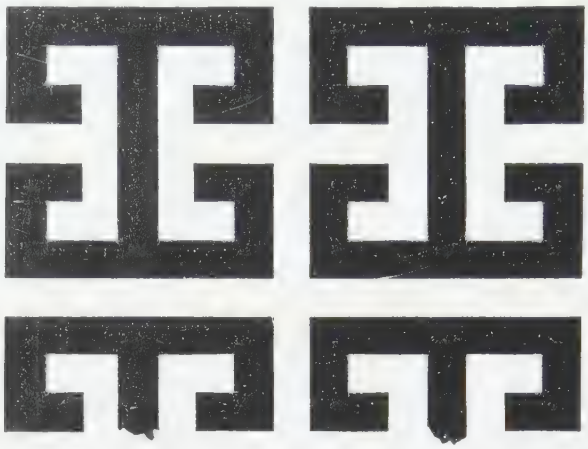


Fig. 22.

No. 5 of the series of elements, in whatever manner it may be treated, produces neither continuous nor independent design.

I am compelled for the moment to leave the diapers, for actual observation supplies me with no other examples. The result of the study of those which I have actually observed, may be stated thus: there is discoverable among them a regularly developed series, which depends on a regularly arranged series of *pakwa* elements; and that it begins, as all good series should begin, with a simple, and ends with a complicated form.

One important point must here be noted; the series of elements, so far as we have studied them, produces diapers which with one exception, are referable to what I have called the "Chinese puzzle" principle, where, to repeat myself, the space-shape is identical with the elemental design-shape. The exception is fig. 15, with its elongated returned ends; and it seems manifest that there must be a second and more elaborate series of diapers, constructed of elements of which some or all of the parts are prolonged. I did not come across them in Nikko or Shiba, and must therefore seek them *aliunde*.

Now, if I take the second of the elementary diapers, fig. 7, where the pairs of *pakwa* elements are arranged half-back-to-back, and fill in the continuous line which runs round the elements at right angles to the general arrangement of the diaper, I get at once the simple "Key." This is shewn in fig. 23, where the diaper is printed in grey, and the "key" in black, in order to make this re-

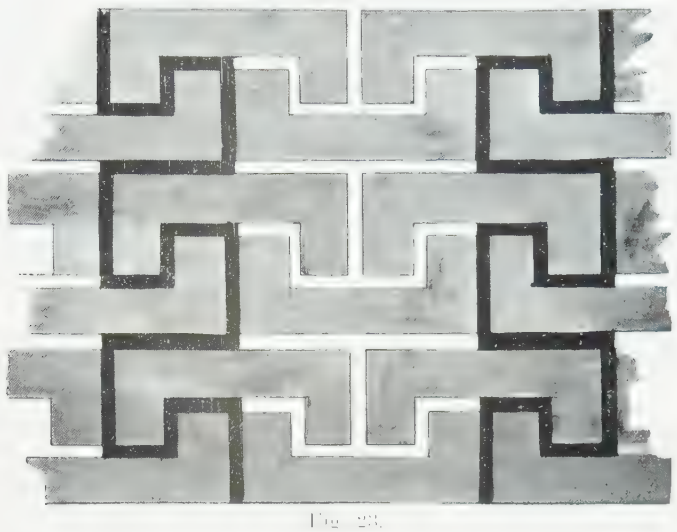


Fig. 23.

markable and probably, to my readers, unexpected appearance of what they know as the "Greek key" plainer. In due course I shall explain how it was that this tansverse section of the diaper came to be taken for the production of the "key"-border.

I next treat the first of the elementary diapers, fig. 5, in similar fashion. The result, shewn in fig. 24, is not a regular "key"-border; but it is a well-known variant, sometimes called the "double key."

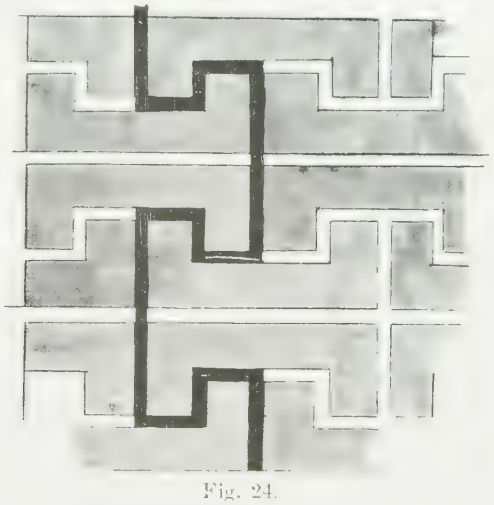


Fig. 24.

Pursuing the idea of taking a transverse section of the diapers, we find that fig. 15 so treated produces the same double "key," (fig. 25), with the addition of a central limb.

Fig. 25.

From these results a conclusion, apparently obvious, seems in waiting to be drawn—that a transverse section of any diaper will produce a "key"-border corresponding to it.* But a brief study of the other diapers figured in the preceding pages will be sufficient to dispel the illusion that we have arrived at the end of the enquiry, for some of them will not produce a "key" of any sort. We have really got no further than this: that a transverse section of some diapers produces a "key," and of some others it produces a variant. Yet this does leave the suggestion a probable one, that all "keys" are produced from diapers, so long as they are constructed on the same principle as fig. 7: that is to say, diapers in which the component elements are arranged in pairs half-back-to-back.

A "key" is a continuous fillet; and this diaper, as well as fig. 5, the other elementary diaper, and also fig. 15, as shewn above, has a continuous line round the elements of which it is composed. But where the "Chinese-puzzle" principle is the basis of construction, it is clear that there can be no line round the elements, because the elements and the spaces "fit"; and therefore no diaper constructed on this principle will give a "key."

It has already been noted that the feature which distinguishes fig. 15 from the other diapers, the prolongation of the returned end of the *pakwa* element to 2 units, plays an important part in the production of this continuous line. It seems clear, therefore, that if "keys" are always produced from diapers, these diapers must be constructed from elements in which some or all of the parts are prolonged.

This much said, I propose now to take the first step in the discovery of the series of diapers with which as yet we are not familiar. In doing so I shall assume nothing, but merely avail myself of the suggestion which the foregoing discussion makes inevitable, and turn to the "key"-borders themselves for light.

Although it is conceded that the eastern and the Greek "keys" are the same, I take the elementary "key" (fig. 26) from the Greek examples given by

* For the benefit of those who have studied the paper which I read before the Japan Society, referred to at the beginning of this chapter, I ought to confess that this conclusion was in fact drawn in it. Subsequent consideration has however shewn that it is only partially true.

Owen Jones (plate XV, No. 1). It makes this point clear, that in the Greek "keys," the fillet, or meander, was the same breadth as the elemental "crooks" which make it.

Fig. 26.

This border is composed of a continuous series of units of design in the form of fig. 27; and the first thing that strikes one about this unit is its obviously intimate relation with the now familiar *pakwa* element; that the black "crooks" are apparently half the element, with the returned end prolonged to 2 units. Further, these "crooks" or half elements, interlock in the same way as the elements themselves in the diaper, fig. 15, with a space of 1 unit round them, which makes, as it did in that diaper, the continuous fillet.

Fig. 27.

One difference will be noted between fig. 26 and the "key" produced by the elementary diaper in fig. 23; there is a bar both at the top and bottom of the border, from which the "crooks" spring. It would seem, though for the moment I cannot assume it, as if these bars or borders stand in the same relation to "crooks" or half elements as the central stem (fig. 10*a*) does to the whole element from which the diapers are constructed. This remains to be proved.

I have proceeded in my argument so cautiously up to the present, that I take the next step without hesitation. I prolong the lines of fig. 26, and repeat the figure on the other side of the bar, which is shaded to make the procedure clearer. This gives us fig. 28.

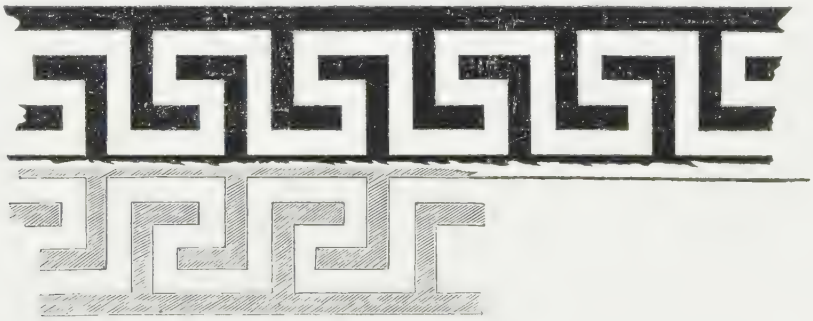


Fig. 28.

This is actually among the "key"-borders given by Owen Jones (pl. XV, No. 17), and is said to have come from the coffers of the ceiling of the Propylæa at Athens. The learned author describes it as two "keys" placed one above the other, running in opposite directions. There is, I think, another explanation of it, which gives us the clue to the construction of these borders.

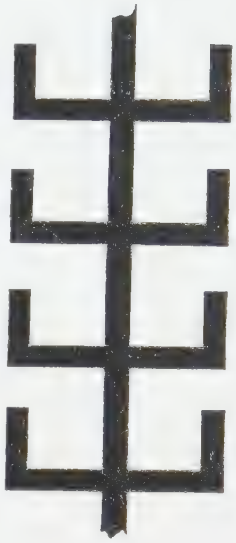


Fig. 29.

There is running through it a series of regular and recurrent figures making together a fish-bone, resembling fig. 29, into which the reversed "crooks" are locked; the result, two "key" fillets running in opposite directions, is inevitable, bearing in mind the fact that the spaces and the "crooks" are the same breadth. It seems obvious that the "fishbone" is the cause and not the consequence.

At this point yet another conclusion seems to be in waiting, which, if it were legitimate to draw it, would bring the argument to a satisfactory termination. For if the process of prolonging the lines be applied to both sides of the border, we should get to a diaper; which again seems to shew the intimate relation between the "keys" and the diapers. I must, however, proceed by a more circuitous method of reasoning.

The "fish-bone" seems to have been purposely constructed from a series of entire *pakwa* elements with the central limb, placed one on top of the other; and if this is so, and if other "keys" can be constructed on this principle, the true

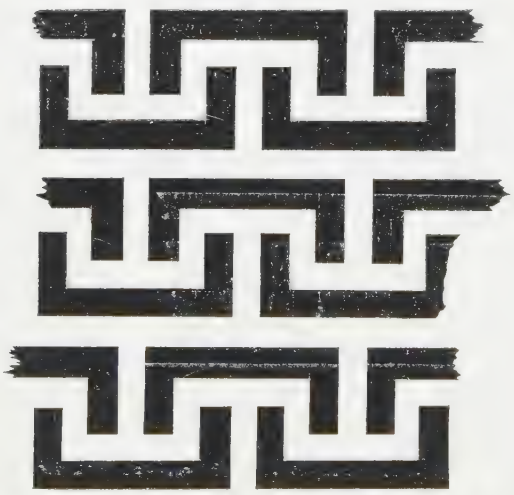


Fig. 30.

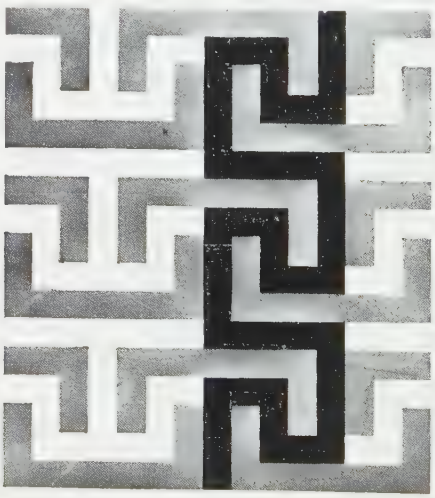


Fig. 31.

inwardness of this figure will become apparent: it establishes the relation between the *pakwa* and the "key"-borders.

In order to test this I revert once more to the elementary diaper, fig. 7, and the "key" produced from it, as shewn in fig. 23. The narrow fillet between the elements makes comparison with fig. 26 difficult. I have therefore expanded this diaper so as to give the space its due proportion of one unit; and for this purpose, as explained in connexion with fig. 15, the returned end has been lengthened to 2 units. This gives us fig. 30; and treating fig. 23 in a similar manner, we get fig. 31. The essential difference between figs. 31 and 26, is, as already explained, the bars or borders in fig. 26, from which the half elements spring.

The next step is easy, and is based on the previous course of the argument. If we take the element with the central limb, fig. 14, and arrange the pairs half-back-to-back instead of back-to-back as in fig. 15, we get to fig. 32, a diaper, the salient feature of which is a series of "fish-bone" figures set alternately up and down, so that the returned ends (2 units long) lock with a space of 1 unit

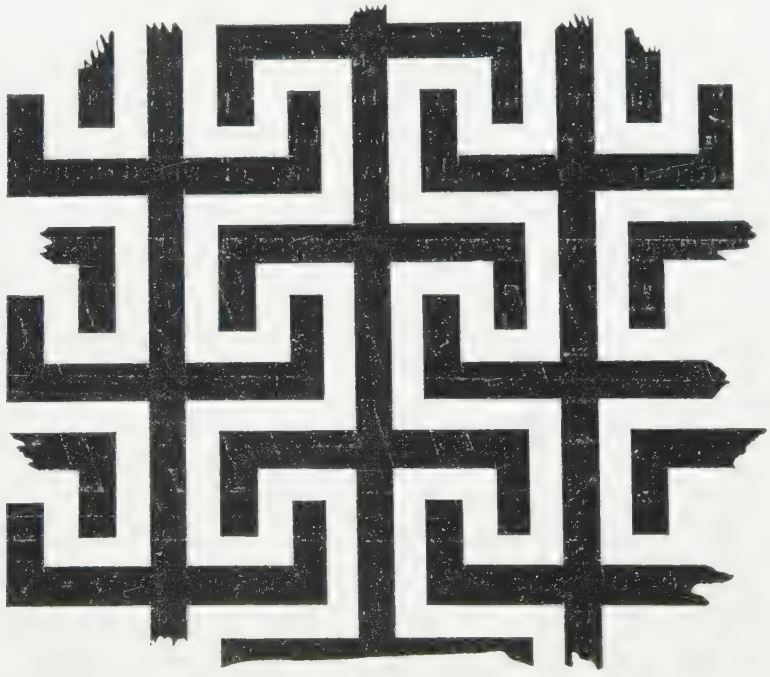


Fig. 32

between them. The ends of the contiguous elements are 3 units apart, in order to allow the central limbs to come into the design. The transverse section of

this diaper gives us fig. 33, which is the "key," 26 in its entirety: that is, with the top and bottom bars. Fig. 32 is in fact the diaper which has already been

Fig. 33.

suggested as resulting from prolonging the lines of the border, fig. 28, both ways. The suggestion made above, that the bars of the "key"-border in its common form hold the same relation to the half elements as the central stem does to the whole element in the diapers is, therefore, borne out. We must now see whether what has been done in this simple case produces the same results in the case of other "keys."

Fig. 34 is given as a Greek "key" by Owen Jones (pl. XV, No. 2), and he calls it the "raking fret," holding it to be the parent of all the other forms of interlacing ornaments in styles, such as the Arabian, which succeeded the Greek. He attributes to its influence many of the designs found in the Alhambra.

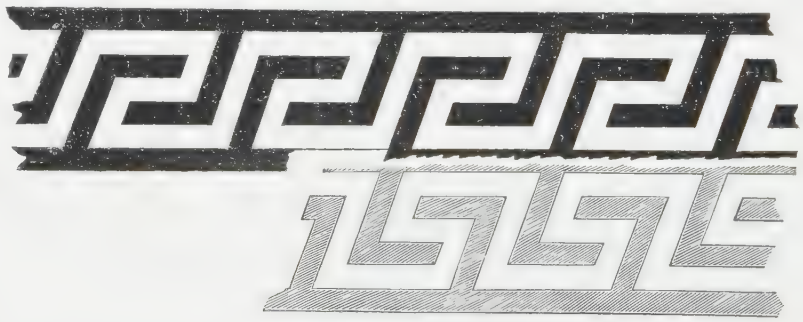


Fig. 34.

I have a treated it in the same way as fig. 26, and as before, the "fish-bone" arrangement of the *pakwa*, but set at an angle, appears. The returned ends of the elements are lengthened to 3 units. The inclination of the lines merely shews that the Greeks, like the Chinese occasionally sought variety from the normal rectilinear arrangement. We have already had an instance of this practice in the East in the diaper, fig. 22.

The prolongation of the returned ends may be carried to any extent, as in the following example, fig. 35, where the return is 6 units, and the length of the element only 9 units.

Fig. 35.

As a principle of construction of "keys" without the necessity of making the entire diaper, the "fish-bone" arrangement is simple where the *pakwa* element is used in its elementary form; but it is necessary to see whether it is applicable to more elaborate forms.

Fig. 36 is another Greek "key" given by Owen Jones (pl. XV, No. 9). The prolonged lines shew that it is based on a "fish-bone" arrangement of an element, which is a development of No. 3 in the series of *pakwa* elements given in fig. 21. The returned ends are 4 units, and the second return 2 units.

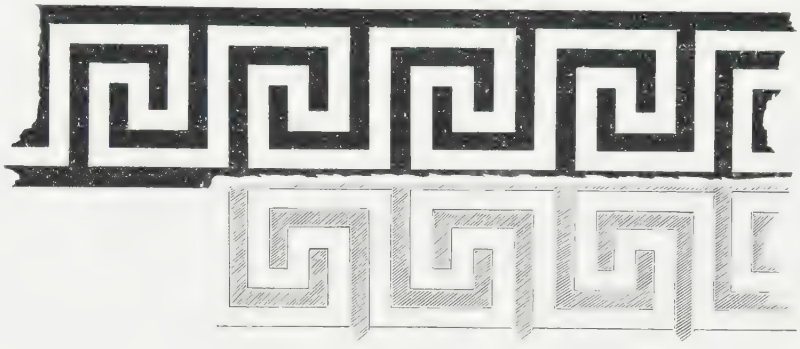


Fig. 36.

We may conclude from this that the "fish-bone" arrangement is as much the clue to the construction of a more advanced order of "key"-borders as it was in the case of simpler examples, and it seems obvious that a great variety of "keys" can be produced by this very simple means. The process of interlocking the ends of the elements is of course the point at which the artist's ingenuity comes into play; but it is precisely the same ingenuity, exercised in precisely similar circumstances, as that which was required for the construction of the diapers out of the same elements. In proof of which I give fig. 37, which is the diaper fully developed from fig. 36.

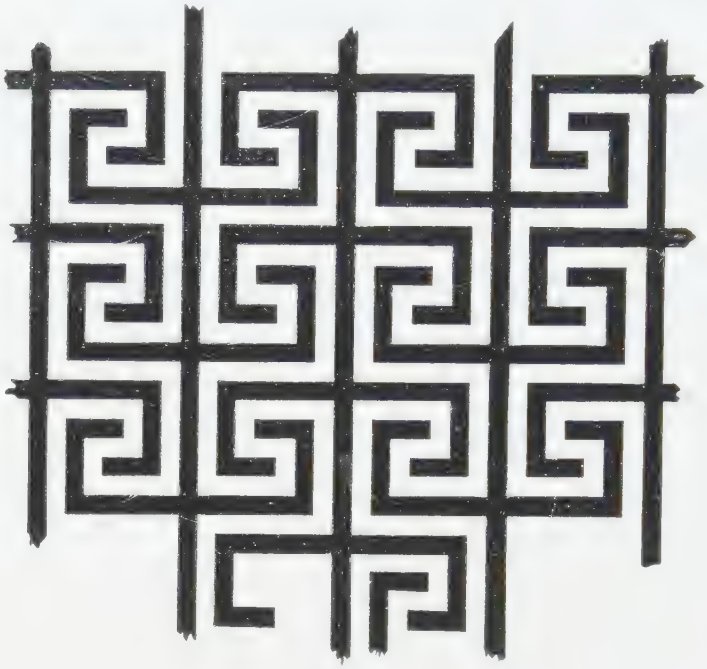


Fig. 37

So far, therefore, as "keys" are concerned, in which the element is not very complicated, their genesis is clear. They are transverse sections of diapers constructed in the same way as fig. 32: the *pakwa* element having been selected, and the due proportion of its returns determined with a view to interlocking, they are arranged half-back-to-back like the simple elements in the elementary diaper fig. 7. One little point may be noted here. *Pakwa* elements without a central stem give "keys" without bars at top and bottom; those with the stem give "keys" with these bars.

The "fish-bone" arrangement having served its purpose, I have discarded it in adopting this method of construction, which is more scientific; because if the designer starts with the "fish-bone," he has nothing to guide him in determining the length of the central limb, the important factor on which the interlocking primarily depends. I have purposely drawn the "fish-bone" in fig. 29, in an arbitrary fashion in order to emphasise this difficulty. In making the diaper the real basis of construction this length is determined, as it has a definite relation to the length of the base of the element.

So far we have been concerned with the "keys" which are produced by the half-back-to-back arrangement of the elements, which have earned the name of

"true keys." Owen Jones defines a "key" as a continuously meandering line, all others as imperfect. The full back-to-back arrangement has somewhat dropped out of sight; but that also, as we have seen, produces a continuous line, and the section of the diaper a border well worthy of attention. The diaper fig. 15 has given us the border fig, 25, and it must be obvious that a variety of designs of great charm may be produced from such diapers, so long as they do not drop into the "Chinese-puzzle" principle which produces no borders.

The next design, fig. 38, is one of these borders, which I found at Nikko. I have continued the lines in the same way as in the case of the Greek frets, and it will be seen that the unit of design is a pair of simple *pakwa* elements, without the central limb, set back-to-back, the returned ends being 4 units, and the second return 1 unit. In order to make this a little clearer, and to enable the comparison to be made, I have in fig. 38*a* transposed the black and white parts of the

Fig. 38

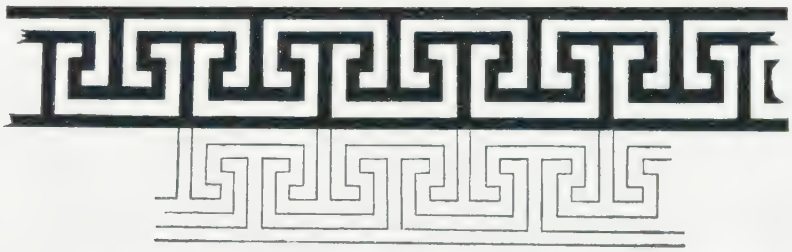
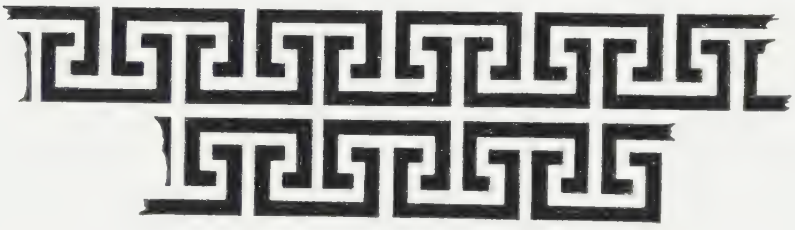


Fig 38*a*



drawing. It gives us the elementary diaper fig. 5, elaborated; and the fillet is the same as that given in fig. 25, as resulting from the diaper fig. 15. But this is not a continuous meander, for it is broken by the vertical lines, which disturb its effect. Indeed, if we turn once more to fig. 24, it will be seen that the black line is not a true meander, for it passes over and omits the vertical white lines. Fillets broken in this way may be taken to be the feature of frets produced from diapers constructed on the back-to-back principle. On the artistic virtue of the uninterrupted meandering line I shall dwell presently.

But there are undoubtedly many designs which may be described as "imperfect" "key"-borders; and I should define them to be those which are constructed

upon some principle of their own, and are not based on a regular diaper. Fig. 39, which is one of Owen Jones' Greek frets, (pl. XV, No. 22) is a good illustration.

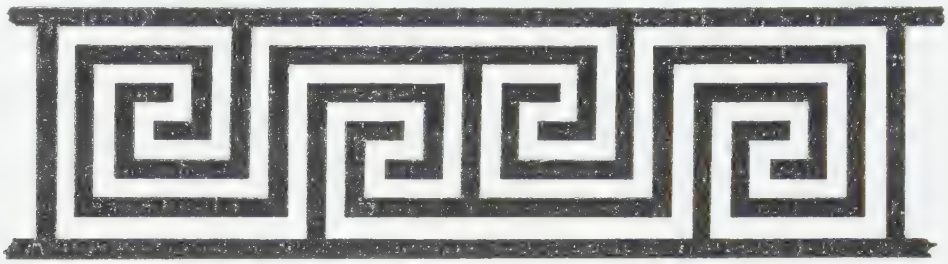


Fig. 39.

The introduction of an imperfect fret here will give point to the argument. The definition shall be justified at a latter stage when I come to examine the Greek frets more closely; but it is well that those who are familiar with this class of design should appreciate at once the fact that there is a right and a wrong. The defects in fig. 39 will, I think, be readily appreciated. The repetition of the principal motive at different levels is irritating; although the great essential, a repeated thought is present, the design as a whole lacks continuity of thought. The construction is almost too ingenious; nothing rests in the mind but a confused maze of lines. There is in fact, if you care to worry it out, a continuous meander, but it is impossible for the mind to grasp it, to use a figurative expression, it is perpetually being switched off the rails. Above all, prolongation of the lines would result in nothing more than a repetition of the maze; would produce nothing which, by any stretch of the imagination, could be called a diaper. These and other points will be dealt with fully in due course; for the present we must revert to our study of the true "keys."

I now come to two very complicated borders; the first, fig. 40, from Nikko, the second, fig. 41, based on one of Owen Jones' Greek frets. (pl. XV, No. 12.)

Fig. 40.

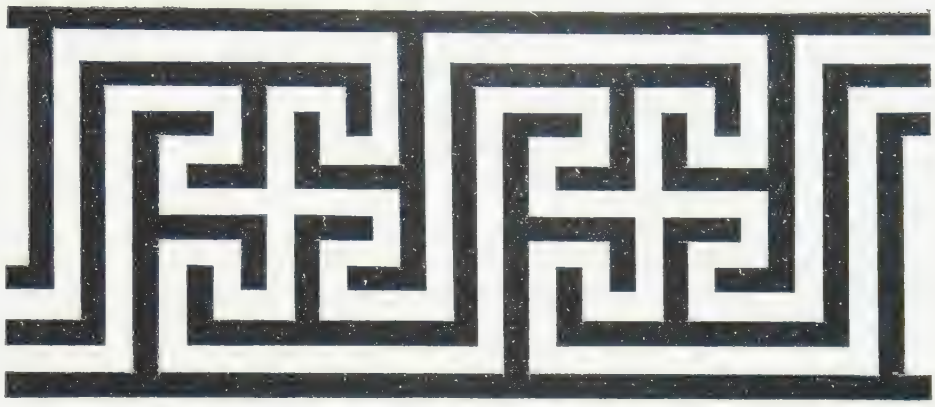


Fig. 41.

These two designs are examples of the "key"-border in its highest stage of development. It is obvious that although they come from different sources, they belong to the scheme of decoration, could not have been produced independently of one another, and that the second carries on the idea of the first to a higher pitch of perfection. That idea is the emphatic repetition of the *svastika*, which is produced by the lines of design in the first, and by the space-shape in the second. In order to discover how these two borders came into existence, I have prolonged the lines as in the previous cases, with the following results.

Fig. 40 developes into fig. 42; the black and white having been transposed as in a previous case, to facilitate comparison.

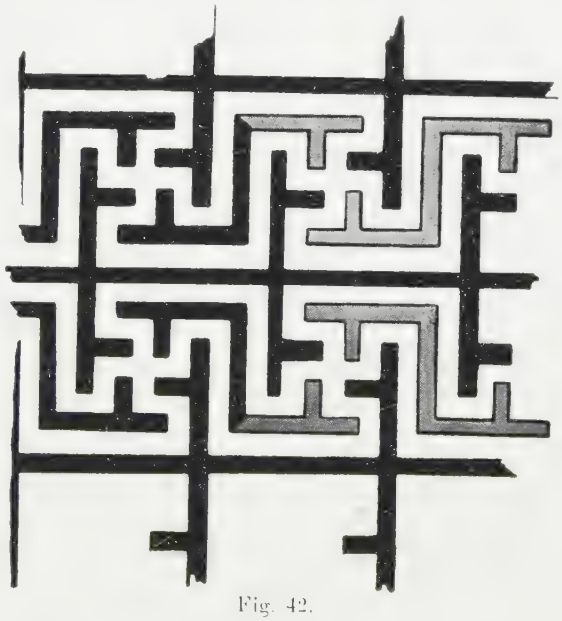


Fig. 42.

The first point to be noted about this figure is that its formal regularity proclaims it to be a diaper constructed out of *pakwa* elements, with regularly recurrent features resembling in their nature the diapers we have already studied. The element used is the one with the returned end moved in (No. 4 of fig. 21); but the return is 2 units long, and it is moved in 2 units from the end; the length of the element is 13 units, and of the central limb 9 units. The second point is that the "fish-bone" arrangement of this element is as marked as it was in the case of the simple "keys" when developed. But another feature has been introduced, indicated by shading; and this new feature has an evident affinity with the *pakwa* element on which the design is based. It might be described as half the principal element, for it also has a "return," which is moved in from the end by 2 units.

The border fig. 41, treated in the same way produces the diaper fig. 43, the constructive principles upon which it is based being identical with those of fig. 42.

Fig. 43.

The "fish-bone" (printed black throughout) is constructed from the elaborate development of the *pakwa* element, No. 6 of fig. 21, on which the diaper fig. 20 is based; but it is very much extended to permit the parts to interlock. The base of the element is 21 units, the returned ends 2, the "crook" 4, and its return 2 units: the length of the central limb is 13 units. The secondary figure in this diaper has the same affinity with the principal element as it has in fig. 42; for it also has a "crook" and a returned end, and is, as before, half of it. To those secondary figures we must now turn our attention.

When a diaper is constructed on the half-back-to-back principle with an element which has a central limb, a large space is left between the ends of the contiguous elements as already explained in connexion with fig. 32. In that case the space was 3 units; in both of these developed diapers, figs. 42 and 43, it is 7 units. The same thing occurs in the back-to-back diapers, where the central limb also passes between two elements. In the case of the diapers we are now considering, it is hardly necessary to explain that as the space between the halves of the elements which face one another must partake of the character of the elements, so the figure which is used to fill up these spaces must have the same characteristic features as the elements. They also have an affinity with another figure which we have not yet examined.

The position which these two diapers hold in the enquiry is very important. First, there is an obvious relationship between them and the two earlier diapers, figs. 17 and 19. In them the *svastika* was produced in outline only, on account of the closely fitting spaces; in these it is produced in solid form by the space-designs, which, as we know now, are the direct result of the half-back-to-back arrangement of the elements.

But secondly, it must be obvious to those who have followed the gradual progress of the argument, that not only do these two borders appear at the end of a series of which we have the beginnings, but that the diapers produced by them are also manifestly at the end of a series of diapers which begins with the one so often referred to, fig. 15. We have in fact found the end of the second and more elaborate series, the existence of which has been suggested on a previous page: a series in which some or all of the parts are prolonged.

And so far as the "keys" are concerned, the same law which connects the early borders with diapers, and conversely the early diapers with borders, connects these two elaborate borders with diapers, and conversely, these two elaborate diapers with borders. The intimate relationship between "key-borders" and *pakwa* diapers, which I have suggested throughout as being more than possible, is therefore established.

The secondary figures which have appeared in these diapers have a close affinity with another kind of border, which has been independently developed from the *svastika*, which we must now proceed to examine.

THE SVASTIKA BORDERS.

The *Svastika* having, as already explained, appeared during the process of the development of the diapers, gave rise of itself to a series of designs, which engendered borders often mistaken for "key"-borders.

The symbol derives its distinctive character from the ends of its limbs being returned in opposite directions. By prolonging and again rerturning the ends, and repeating this process, the following figure, fig. 44, was obtained.

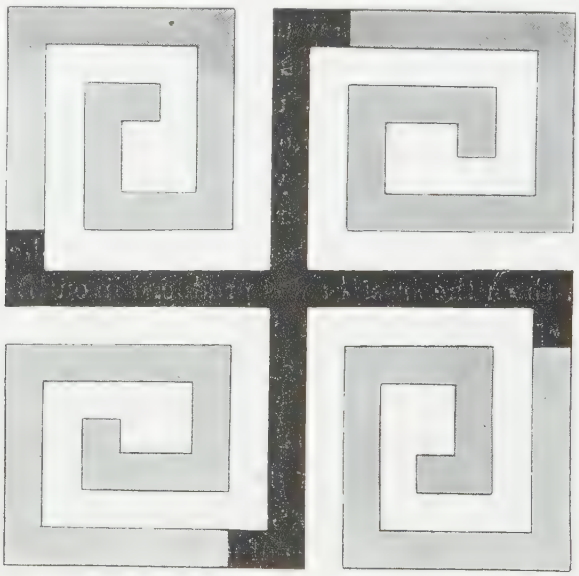


Fig. 44.

The special characteristic of this developed *Svastika* is that while each section is identical in the contours of its prolongations, each prolongation is at a different angle, is turned through 90 degrees from the one preceding it. This peculiarity lent itself readily to the artistic conceptions of the Japanese designers; for its appearance was as fanciful as its development was formal; and when the lines were cut with the triangular gouge, they scattered the light as effectively as the pine design itself. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that it figures

largely, either in whole or in part, in the temple diapers. Occasionally it appears as a fillet, the whole being repeated, as in fig. 45.

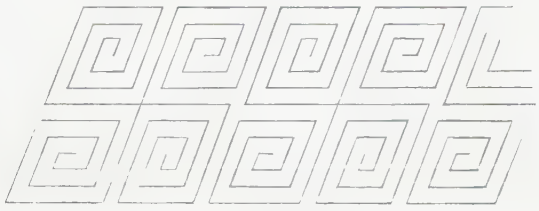


Fig. 45

Sometimes one symbol with its developed ends form the basis of an entire design.

Yet again, isolated sections of the figure were arranged in series to form a border, as in fig. 46, which comes from the edge of a water tank in the Temple of Iyeyasu at Nikko.

Fig. 46

This fillet differs in many respects from the "key"-borders. It is an arrangement of independent units of design; there is therefore no continuity of

Fig. 47

Fig. 48

line, nor any meandering fillet; and in this instance even the base line is omittted, so that these units spring from nothing. It is, however, exceedingly effective.

From this sprang the "S"-like figure of which the next two borders are composed, figs. 47 and 48. Its connexion with the developed *svastika* is fairly obvious, and it originated in a very simple manner.

We are now so familiar with the ways of the eastern designer, that it will cause no surprise to find him obtaining a little variety in his borders by arranging the *svastika* elements alternately up-side down, as in fig. 49. The "S"-like figure is the intervening space between them, and is of course the black design of figs. 47 and 48. The bars which I have introduced are taken from fig. 48.

Fig. 49

The next development was inevitable. These "S" figures were evidently made to be interlocked; and so, pruning them of some of their involutions, they were interlocked and produced the borders given in figs. 50 and 50*a*.

Fig. 50 is given by Owen Jones among the Greek "keys" (No. 7 pl. XV); but it does not fulfil his own definition, that a "key" is a continuous meander;

Fig. 50

Fig. 50*a*

for the units of design are "S" figures, and the space does not meander, but merges in the white bands above and below the design.

Fig. 50*a* which I found on the walls of the Arena at Arles, is of course the same design; but the "S" figure is in white and formed by the spaces, and the second return is 3 units instead of 2. I have given the two drawings of the same design in order to shew the different effects produced according as the principal feature of the design is treated in black or white, as design or space. It also emphasises the point just taken, that this fillet does not produce a genuine meandering line.

These borders have a superficial resemblance to the "key"-borders; but this arises from the affinity between the *swastika* and the *pakwa*. Their origin and development shew that they belong to a different order of design, and therefore cannot be called imperfect "keys."

One further point in connexion with the *swastika* must be noticed. Its own complete form, when its returned limbs are prolonged as in fig, 44, suggested larger units of design, composed of four sections, corresponding with the four outlined sections of the diaper, fig. 20; that is to say, with the diagonally opposite figures corresponding. Traces of this enlarged figure will be seen in some of the diapers on plates 4 to 8. It also appears in one of the Greek designs given by Owen Jones, (No. 15, pl. XV), which I reproduce, fig. 51.

Fig. 51

The top right and lower left corners of this figure linked by the central connecting line, shews it obvious relationship with the *swastika*. The design is

elaborated by the interlacing of the lines of other similar figures; and were it not for the small squares in the remaining sections, about which I shall speak presently, it would rank among the best of its class.

There seems to be little doubt that there is an affinity between the secondary figures in the diapers 42 and 43 and this "S" figure, for they also are "S" in form. These secondary figures take their shape, as we have seen, from that of the spaces left unfilled by the *pakwa* elements of which the "fish-bone" is composed; but I think this much may be said, that the existence of the "S" as a recognised form of design gave a certain warrant for its use in these diapers, quite apart from the fact that it was identical with the form of the element itself, and was able to take on its embellishments. The main point is that these considerations shew that these secondary figures are not hap-hazard, resulting merely from the desire to fill an awkwardly-shaped space. But this further remark seems also permissible; that they are a definite feature in the development of this form of decoration, and point to an all-pervading scheme which links all the parts of the system together.

The results of the enquiry may now be briefly summarised.

The complexity of the "key" designs puts spontaneous evolutiou out of the question; the obvious relation of the "key" with the *pakwa* symbol leaves no room for gradual evolution from any other figure; and lastly, the dependence of the "key"-borders on the *pakwa* diapers as the means of construction is so absolute as to leave no possibility of there being any other.

I must, however, notice a theory which seems to have attracted the attention of students of the subject. During the discussion which followed the reading of my paper before the Japan Society, Mr. Gowland, a member well-known for his erudition, made the following remarks:—

> "The generally accepted explanation of the origin of these patterns—which was first propounded by General Pitt-Rivers—is, that they were developed from simple concentric circles, which by being subsequently united by a curved line gradually passed into a series of re-entering spirals, and that from these, by the exigencies of ornament in later times, the rectangular forms were evolved. The fact that some of the oldest bronzes of Japan—earlier than the 6th century A.C.—are ornamented with these spirals supports General Pitt-Rivers, contention that the circular form preceded the rectangular. There is however, no proof that the rectangular forms were developed in this manner in Japan, as no patterns showing the necessary transitional stages have been observed in the country. Possibly they may be found in China, and, in fact, all the evidence we possess is in favour of that country rather than Japan having been the original home of the pattern. It is indeed not until many centuries after its use in China that we find it on Japanese objects, and then only on those which have been copied from Chinese models."

Quite apart from the considerations which I have advanced, this theory does not appear to be very satisfactory. Undoubtedly, circular forms may

engender rectilinear forms; but equally they may be engendered by them. There are indeed some well-known curvilinear borders which seem to have an affinity with the "key"-borders; but, as Mr. Gowland pointed out, the theory of evolution one from the other carries us no distance at all, unless we have the historical fact to start from, which of the forms preceded the other in first creation. But again, the complicated forms of the "key," looked at as a mere border, and their evident development one from the other in an ordered sequence, do not at all fit in with the theory of evolution from some circular design. Even granted that there is some circular ancestor of the "key" in its simpler forms, it has not, I think, ever been advanced that there are circular forms corresponding to, or which could have been the direct parents of, the complicated "keys"; therefore we should still have to find the "key" whence these complicated borders came. So that even accepting the circular genesis, we are left at precisely the same point at which we have arrived, that there is a regular and orderly sequence of development traceable from the "key" in its simple form, down to its most elaborate example which has just been studied.

But I have still to explain and justify the use of the word "border" in its application to the "key" patterns. Of course the shape of them suggests their use as borders; but the point I have now to make is that, although after they had been devised they came to be used independently, in their inception they were used as definite borders to the diapers from which they sprang and that herein lies the secret of their origin.

We may imagine the artist designer, his wall covered with a beautiful diaper, yet finding something wanting: something not altogether satisfactory in the abrupt ending to the design at the top of the wall. The idea of a border must have occurred very early in the history of the decorative art, as a much less crude way of finishing off the work than merely cutting the diaper short, with its lines left at a loose end. Of course a border does precisely the same thing, so that apparently there was nothing to be gained by its introduction.

But even such trifles as art-borders, like everything else in the world, have made for themselves a little rule of conduct for those who design them. There is a border which is right, and a border which is wrong; and there can be little doubt that the right border is one which has a definite relation to the design it borders. Otherwise it would be an independent design, its designer rather troubled to explain the reason for its being where it is. If the design could speak, and, figuratively, all design should speak, it would confess at once that it was out of place.

The Morris designers discovered this rule very early in their career; their best friezes always had this definite relation to the designs of the wall-papers. If early memories serve me right, this was one of the first of their art discoveries.

The reason for the rule is not far to seek, if we remember what designing means, and especially designing which has for its aim the covering of large blank surfaces. It is intended to provide a little recreation for the brain, weary of the flat surfaces of mundane things. If the eye constantly sees the same dulness wherever it turns, it can only impart dull impressions to an already weary brain; but when the blank space is broken up by meandering lines, leading to pleasant spaces, even if they convey no suggestion, of flower or bird, of cloudlet or ripple or stormy sea, still the eye delights in its wanderings, the brain finds pleasure in line for beautiful line's sake. Looking at the diapers merely as an arrangement of lines set in a beautiful maze, we have seen how this effect is enhanced by the play of light and shade, the sun glinting from the high relief, the clouds giving depth to the shadows. But when all this comes to an abrupt termination, when, the glitter is cut off by that most detestable thing a "hard line," dissatisfaction at once supervenes. But if then the eye lights upon a border in the same order of ideas as the decoration of the surface, pleasant surprise takes the place of dissatisfaction; the eye follows it in its wandering, the brain is beguiled from its evil humour, and suffering from no sharp shock, continues its train of artistic thought which the design itself has set going.

But, says the critic, did this pleasant little theory suggest itself to the eastern artists centuries ago? I answer that it is probable, for they were our masters in design. Moreover, I have a witness ready to give evidence in my behalf; a witness, it is true, of quite modern times, for the artist dwelt not more than three hundred years ago. But Japan is a land of tradition; and we may be sure that he held by his traditions faithfully when he devised that star-like border which I have figured on plate 6, among the diapers. For it is, as I have said, no more than a diagonal section of the pine tree design; and I have in my mind's eye the very wall on which this diaper glistened in red lacquer, with the star-like border to finish it.

This question of finishing off a design is really a very troublesome one, needing much discrimination in dealing with it, and many fail most lamentably, as a certain long-forgotten artist did many centuries ago at Arles, when the Roman colonists were building their Arena. On a stone border above a window I found this device, cut as roughly as I have drawn it in fig. 52.

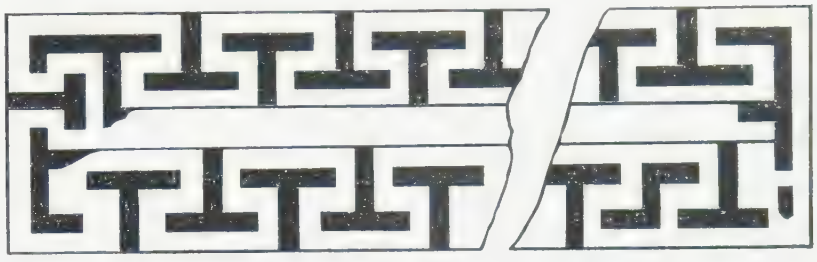


Fig. 52

What a melancholy story of incapacity and indecision these lines tell; what a dull brain the sculptor must have had to finish off his design in so crude a fashion. The design itself is bad enough, but his instinct told him that an abrupt ending was to be avoided; and those grotesque figures at the ends were all he could devise. But perhaps it was the work of prentice hands! The master-sculptor must have passed it. And Arlesium was no such mean city in the days of Constantine, that it should have the work of prentices foisted on it.

And now, what of the Greeks? What of the claim advanced on their behalf that they were the originators of these famous borders? Are they truly called "Greek keys"?

Coming now to the end of the discussion, I find myself sceptical as to the soundness of even my own remarks on the subject, made at the beginning of what has been for me, as well as for those of my readers who have been patient enough to travel it with me, a voyage of discovery. In this one especially I now entirely disbelieve:—that the whole system of borders went from China into Greece, and not some isolated frets from which the eastern system was reconstructed by the Grecian decorators.

The hypothesis throughout has been that the "key" systems of the East and West are identical, in spite of the fact that there seems to be no trace of the eastern diapers in Greece. It is indeed this hypothesis that has given rise to the little calumny, as I think it, that China borrowed its "key"-borders from the West. There seems to be every reason to believe that isolated fragments only, and not the complete system travelled to Greece; and that, contrary to what I have supposed the system was never completely reconstructed in its original purity. The internal evidence which the Greek "keys" themselves furnish, seems to indicate that while some notions of the value of the Eastern

"key" for decorative purposes were conveyed to the Grecian artists, they knew nothing of its symbolism, and hence there grew out of what they received from the East a very impure series of designs, in which the germ of the original was almost lost.

I shall admit at once that the case for the Greeks may possibly be put much higher than I am able to put it; for my references to Greek design are based on one author alone. But Owen Jones was a keen admirer of Grecian art, a believer in all its virtues; and he devoted some attention to the "Greek key." There may be many more examples of it to be found in other books, many more varieties of its development than he selected. But he drew from the best sources; and, from personal observation, it seems to me probable that his examples are among the best. But on the admissions the case for the Greeks is gone. For the borders actually given by Owen Jones on his plate XV, whether best or worst, did in fact exist, and I am prepared to rest my conclusions on this.

Here is a summary of the author's appreciation of Greek art. It does not want for enthusiasm.

Egyptian ornament was derived direct from natural inspiration, but was founded on few types, remaining unchanged, except in execution, during the whole course of the country's civilisation. Assyrian ornament was a borrowed type, possessing none of the characteristics of original inspiration, appearing rather to have been suggested by the art of Egypt when it had begun to decline, and to have carried the decline still further. But Greek art, though borrowed partly from the Egyptian and partly from the Assyrian, was the development of an old idea in a new direction; and unrestrained by religious laws, as both the Egyptian and Assyrian arts were, it "rose rapidly to a high state of perfection from which it was able to give forth the elements of future greatness to other styles. It carried the perfection of pure form to a point which has never since been reached, and from the very abundant remains we have of Greek ornament, we must believe the presence of refined taste was almost universal, and that the land was overflowing with artists whose hands and minds were so trained as to enable them to execute these beautiful ornaments with unerring truth."

I note, in passing, that in similar exuberance of appreciative language have many of us written of the arts and artists of Japan. But the important part of the admission lies in this statement; and the skilful advocate might legitimately say that no better examples of the "key"-border can be found than those which figure on Owen Jones' plate XV. But there is more.

"Greek ornament was wanting, however, in one of the great charms which should always accompany ornament, *viz.* symbolism. It was meaningless, purely

decorative, never representative, and can hardly be said to be constructive; for the various members of a Greek monument rather present surfaces exquisitely designed to receive ornament, which they did, at first painted, and in later times both carved and painted."

May I not say that here is an admission which, if I am right in my own premises, destroys all claim on the part of the Greeks to have been the originators of the "key"-borders. They are symbolic; were based on the most ancient symbols of the religions of the East. I perforce omit all reference to Græco-Buddhism; but so far as the religion of the Greeks went, there does not seem to be a trace of the *pakwa*, nor of the *svastika*, in any of their ornament, other than is to be found in these borrowed borders.

But the strongest evidence comes from the frets themselves. I make bold to say that with the exception of No. 1, the simple "key": No. 2, the "raking" fret: No. 9, a pure "key": No. 17, the "fish-bone" (the true inwardness of which Owen Jones does not seem to have realised): and No. 7, the "S" fret, the others are of a very low order, and never touch the purity of design which marks the "key"-borders of the East.

By a pure design I mean one belonging to a certain class which is based on a definite origin, and which preserves that origin clearly discernible through all its developments. But in these borders, even assuming that Græco-Buddhism did introduce the *pakwa* and the *svastika* into Greece, there is not one of them which shews their direct influence. Such traces of these symbols as are discoverable are in designs which (as in No. 5, where a section of the *svastika* is used) are clearly borrowed, for as I shall shew directly, they were used without intelligence. The artists seem to have been impressed by the idea, by the "crook" and its potentialities for decorative purposes; they constructed clever devices by combinations of "crooks"; but their cleverness lost itself in efforts to produce the continuous meander which they seemed to consider all-essential. The results are more often than not merely ingenious mazes; many are meaningless, some of them, I venture to think, unspeakably ugly and irritating.

Take No. 22, (fig. 39 in the preceding pages), which I have already criticised. It is undoubtedly exceedingly ingenious; but its very ingenuity bewilders the eye; its structure, judged by Eastern canons, merely fantastic.

Even No. 11 (the upper part of fig. 53), in which the true principles have been followed, is but a feeble adaptation of these ideas. The *svastika* appears, it is true, as the regularly recurrent feature; but the effect is that it is produced by a fortuitous assemblage of "crooks," invisible hands guiding them to catch

some miserable fly caught in the meshes of the lines. Yet it is based on the same principle as figs. 38 and 39; the "fish-bone" is the constructive principle, and the secondary "S" figure is true.

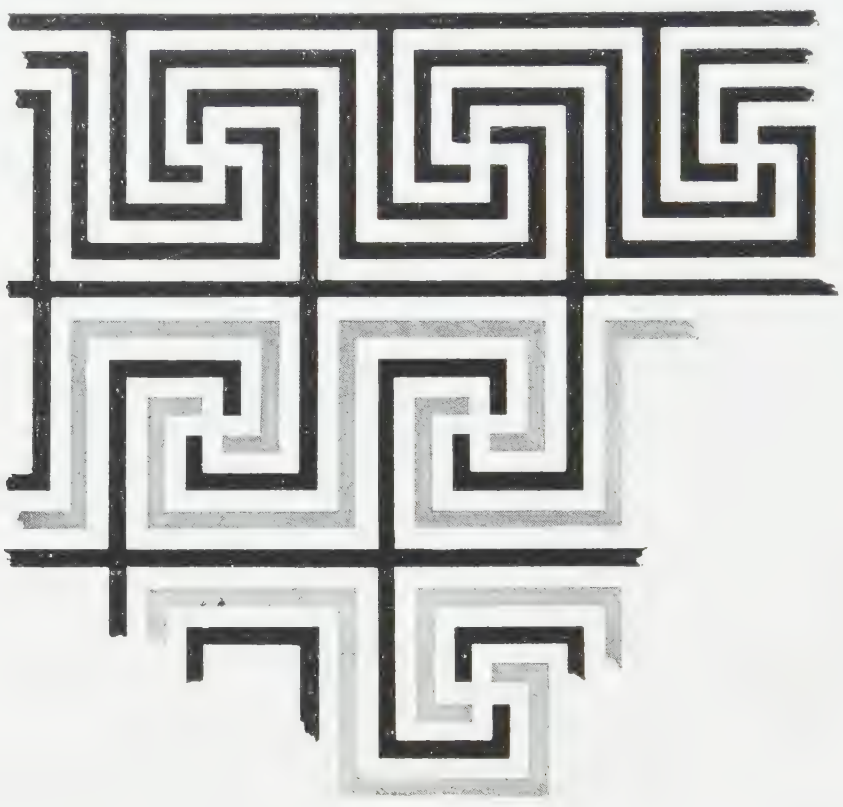


Fig 53

I have copied this No. 11 design in fig. 53, and developed it, as in the other cases, to shew how far below them it stands in the scale of excellence. What is wrong with it is fairly clear. The *pakwa* element is badly chosen, its extensions are unintelligent; it is ungraceful in its proportions, suggesting nothing better than a series of square "pothooks and hangers." And the secondary "S"-figure also inevitably lacks both grace and proportion.

Yet No. 12 (fig. 54) shews that the Greek artists had the best model to work from, the diaper given as fig. 43, which is used in alternate sections. This diaper, as I have said, seems to be the last word in complexity of design, and perfection of result. There is a sense of proportion about the component parts; and even when the diaper is worked out in two colours as I have done in fig. 43,

in order to explain its construction, the *pakwa* element does not unduly force itself on the attention, but merges into the general effect of the design.

Yet, so lacking were the Greeks in appreciating its beauty and wonderful complexity, that though they used it, they must needs endeavour to improve on it.

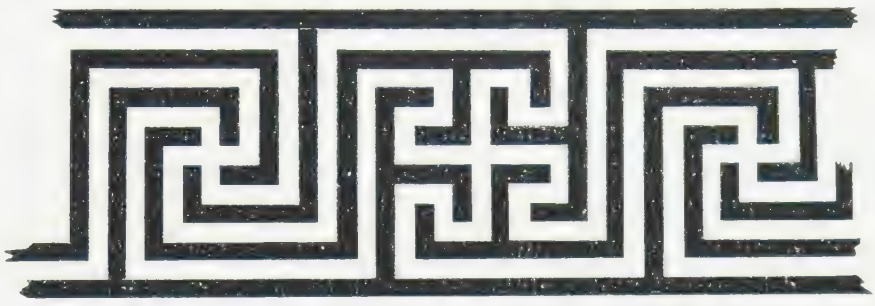


Fig. 54

In Owen Jones' No. 12 it is combined with No. 11, as fig. 54 shews, the large and small resulting *svastikas* alternating. Owing to this combination of two different design, the "S" figure is not uniform, half being the simple "crook" of fig. 53, and the other half having the return and crook, as in fig. 43. Putting it as a mere question of taste, I venture to think that fig. 54 cannot bear comparison with its original, fig. 40.

There are further abundant evidences in this page of designs that the Greeks never accepted the eastern "keys" at their best. It would appear as if their chief characteristic, repetition, stood to them for monotony. The last example shews this; but there are worse signs of their lack of knowledge of the meaning of the borders. Subsidiary and irrelevant ornament came to be introduced; and the "key," instead of being the leading motive of the design, sank into mere bordering for floral ornament.

The most prevalent variation on the eastern design was the introduction of a small square containing internal squares and an ultimate dot, very much in the manner of the lozenges in the diapers. This square appears in the large four-fold design, based on the *svastika*, fig. 51; and if we take the two upper sections and imagine the lines prolonged in both directions so as to make a border, we get to the one which seems to have been a general favourite among the Greeks.

Fig. 55 shews it as I found it at Nîmes on the string-course of the *Maison Carrée*, and also among the relics of the carvings of the Temple of Diana.

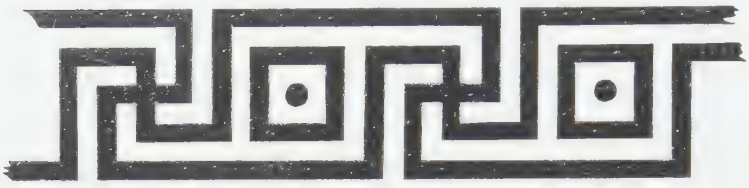


Fig. 55

Distance from Rome, did not make for deterioration of design or careless work; for the antiquaries are agreed that the very best traditions of hellenic art were embodied in this beautiful little gem, of which Nîmes is justly proud, and now guards in pious memory. If some would say that it is absurd to cavil at one minute detail hidden away in a mass of beautiful decoration, the answer is that so high a tradition would allow no detail to go astray or be wanting in beauty. The fact that this design was used on the *Maison Carrée*, shews that it was considered by the Romans as among the best of the Greek border designs; and that Owen Jones was right in including other borders in which this feature appears among his examples of the Greek "key" at its best.

I must not multiply unduly the examples of the badness of this "best"; but I cannot refrain from giving two instances (figs. 56 and 57) of what, from the stand point of these "keys" as the easterns devised them, can only be described as artistic depravity.

Fig. 56.

Fig. 57.

This square ornament must have had a peculiar fascination for the Greeks, for we are perpetually coming across it; and it was developed in a peculiarly grotesque fashion, two, and sometimes three, of the sides being prolonged into ungainly and meaningless crooks, as in fig. 56 (No. 10, pl. XV. of the "Grammar,")

That the Greeks did not lack ingenuity, however, is manifest. I select one special instance, which I have not come across in the East, and assume to be of Grecian design. It is a double meandering line, fig. 55, which is not without grace, though the re-iterated "steps" are somewhat irritating.

Fig 58.

The structure of this border depends on a locked combination of crooks and "S"-figures, each with a return of two units, which make a *svastika* at the crossing of the lines.

With these examples before us of the Greek "key," I take up the threads dropped on a previous page, and discuss once more the meaning of "perfect" and "imperfect" "key"-borders.

I think that too much emphasis is laid on the necessity for a continuous meandering fillet. It certainly led the Greeks to devise such abortions as fig. 57; for even in this there is a continuous line traceable round the inverted "T," which owes its existence entirely to this supposed necessity. (The lines on the right and left of this design are the sides of squares each containing an ornament.) A more accurate definition of a "key"-border is that it is a design in which the returned end of the *pakwa* element, "key"-shaped, or the *svastika*, where this key-shape is four times repeated, is made the principal motive, which is repeated at regularly recurrent intervals. The discussion shews that this can only be obtained in borders which are directly derived from *pakwa* diapers. *A priori*, the regularity which the construction of these diapers demands is the only source from which the same regularity could be obtained in the borders. But the question will bear closer investigation. I assume that a border which belongs to this scheme of decoration must be characterised by a repeated thought; it is the admitted feature of the Greek as well as of the eastern frets. But a designer is not bound to adopt the "key"; he may weave his lines as seems to

him best fitted to the object he has in view; only if he does adopt it, he must conform to the laws which the use of the "key" has engendered.

I have laid considerable stress during the argument on the inference which may be drawn from a prolongation of the lines of a border. Now designs such as figs. 56 and 57, when they are treated in similar fashion, also produce something on the other side of their bordering lines; but it is not a diaper. They do no more than repeat themselves above and below; the pattern is reversed, that is all. Owen Jones' description of the "fish-bone" design (fig. 29) exactly fits them. But a mere repetition of a design even if it be reversed, does not produce a diaper. I imagine that we are all agreed that a diaper, although it is based on the repetition of a small design, is a decoration which treats the surface as a whole; the idea of each part reflects the idea of the whole. But a series of borders placed one above the other produces no continuity of surface design, only a layer of bands. And if the bands are themselves ugly and irritating mazes of lines, the effect of repeating them cannot be anything but wearisome.

By "imperfect" fret I mean, therefore, a fret the design of which, when its lines are prolonged, does not work into a diaper. In other words, I think the diaper controls the true fret: the *pakwa* diaper the true "key"-border.

But I am not really much concerned with the definition of the true or perfect, as distinguished from the untrue or imperfect fret. There must always be an allowance for liking and disliking. The fact that I dislike most of these Greek frets intensely, that they irritate my sense of artistic propriety, will never prevent my friend from admiring them immensely. The only point really in issue is whence the original simple "key"-border, with its numerous offspring, came. That the system of borders in vogue in Greece travelled thence to China is impossible on the face of the examples we have seen; such things are not to be found in Eastern art, either at its best or worst. On the other hand, the East had a complete and coherent system of diapers and borders, mutually dependent; and so far as Greece is concerned the case can be put no higher than this, that fragments of one part of that system are to be found there buried under a mass of design which had no connexion, and was altogether out of sympathy with that system. The conclusion seems obvious that the East was the originator, Greece the borrower.

This then I believe to be the conclusion of the whole matter. The meander in which the Eastern delighted to involve the most sacred symbols of his religion became with the Greeks only a maze, in which the eye's bewilderment led to nothing; and that which was to them nothing led inevitably to meaningless developments. The Eastern artists were not, it is true, fettered in their design-

ing by a religious law; but the laws of design were to them as a religion, which they could not if they would disobey. The Grecian artists also had laws of design, but in them religion found no part. They developed beautiful forms from nature; the honey-suckle inspired those free brush-strokes with the swelling curves, which whether as flat ornament or architectural embellishment still delight us; and herein there is yet another link between the arts of these two nations which knew not one another; for in swelling brush-strokes the Japanese too delighted, and their art derives much of its beautiful vigour from them. But from these graceful floral forms the Greeks had already devised charming designs for surface decoration. They knew too the virtue of the frieze, and, moreover, acted on that little law which I have imagined to govern all good friezes. There is a page of them (plate XVI) in Owen Jones' "Grammar" to tell the tale; some graceful, some severe. It is not hard to see how well these borders "went" with the surface ornamentation of honeysuckle on plates XIX and XX. Almost may we imagine a Grecian household assembled in art conclave to decide the momentous question of the decoration for the new villa, and Owen Jones' plates serving as the decorator's pattern-book. I know which border they would have chosen for each mural design. But as I turn these artistic pages as I turned them many years before I knew the East, the same thought comes over me—What is this plate of "key"-borders doing among the ornament of the Greeks? Surely it is full of alien ideas; without coherence among themselves, with no relation to those other designs which so delighted the eyes of Greece. You cannot imagine a wall covered with honeysuckle curves waving in all directions terminating in a key-border. "Keys" in Greece can only have been used for plain surfaces; there is no trace of surfaces covered with the diapers as in the East. And to this questioning thought I think the answer is this—Whether commerce or religion were the chosen emissary of art matters not at all; but there came at a certain time to the Greek artists fabrics from a far-eastern country, on which were woven strangely meandering lines, which struck them as a pleasing fancy; these they borrowed and treated after their own manner. But the meaning of the symbol hidden among the lines did not reveal itself to them; they knew nothing of the verities of which they spoke to the devotees of the mystic religion which had originated them; and they used the lines, even the symbols, without intelligence. Their very treatment reveals to us now, as I think, that they were artists unlearned in the mysteries of an alien religion; and though they were lucky enough sometimes to light upon the best of the models, they bent them to suit their own fancy, which went on its own way leading to mere bewildering mazes of meaningless lines.

It seems to be fairly certain that the triangular grooving which lends so much charm to the Japanese diapers apart from the designs themselves, never reached Greece; but I am uncertain to what age this form of work must be attributed. One thing strikes me as curious; the diapers can hardly have failed to come to Greece; for the enameller's is a very ancient art, and their work would have been brought home from India with the stuffs by the travelling merchants of Greece; but the diapers, which must have been frequent on the enamels never seem to have appealed to the Greeks in such a way as to lead to their adoption. Possibly their formality displeased them; and the family council, which I have imagined considering the momentous question of design, was loth to part from the waving foliations of their favourite flower. Yet, still relying on Owen Jones, surface decoration composed of small ornaments regularly repeated in spaces formed by intersecting lines, or without them, were common to Egypt, and seem to have reached a certain degree of excellence in Assyrian art. It would seem therefore, as there is no trace of this kind of surface decoration among the Greeks, that the rejection of the eastern diapers followed their prior rejection of those of Egypt and Assyria.

These three concluding plates are referred to on page 55 as illustrations of the best form of conventional naturalism:—

Plate 31, the *nanten*, in dull gold, with scarlet berries, on black lacquer

Plates 32 and 33, iris, in dull gold, with flowers, in bright gold foil, on black lacquer.

Plate 31. THE NANTEN (NANDINA DOMESTICA) CONVENTIONALISED

IRIS, GROWING IN A STREAM, CONVENTIONALISED

明治四十三年六月二十九日印刷
明治四十三年七月二日發行

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著作者　英國人　エフ、アー、ビゾット

發行者　神奈川縣横濱市山町六十番地　ケリー、アンド、ウオルシ株式會社　代表者　ジー、ッチ、メー

印刷者　神奈川縣横濱市山下町六十、番地　イー、ヴイ、ソーン

發行所　神奈川縣横濱市山下町六十番地　ケリー、アンド、ウオルシ株式會社

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